

226. 7. 28

THE
HAPPY ASCETICK:

OR, THE
Best Exercise,
Together with
PRAYERS

Suitable to each **EXERCISE.**

To which is added a
LETTER
TO A

Person of Quality,
Concerning the Holy **LIVES** of the
Primitive Christians.

By **ANTHONY HORNECK, D.D.**
*Late Prebendary of Westminster, Preacher at
the Savoy, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his
MAJESTY.*

The **SIXTH EDITION** Corrected.

L O N D O N :

Printed for **SAMUEL CHAPMAN**, at the *Angel* in *Pall-Mall*; and
RICHARD WARR, at the *Bible and Sun*, in *Amen-Corner*,
near *Pater-Noster-Row*. **MDCCXIV.**

THE
HAPPY ASCETICK

OR THE
VIRGIL

PARAYERS

Suitable to the EXERCISES

OF THE
L E R



By
ANTHONY HORNBOROUGH

Author of the
"The Art of Living"

SIXTH EDITION

LONDON

Printed by
RICHARD WATTS



TO THE
Right Reverend Father in God,
THOMAS,
Lord Bishop of *Lincoln.*

My LORD,



THE Reason, why I dedicate this Treatise to your Lordship, is not any Opinion I have of the Merit of the Book; but my Remembrance of your former Favours. I am sensible how much I am obliged to you, and though I have often professed so much in private, yet I look'd upon the Duty, as imperfect, except I made some publick Acknowledgment; and though the Book may not be worthy of your Patronage, because it comes not attended with new Notions, yet I thought it safer to run the Hazard of being judged unlearned, than that of being counted ungrateful.

Epistle Dedicatory.

My Lord, you were the Person who first took Notice of me in the University, and by your Sun-shine, warm'd and cherish'd my Endeavours, and gave Encouragement to those Studies, I am now engaged in, and as under your Shadow I then advanced, and prosper'd; So now that the Fruit, though of a coarser Sort, is come to some Maturity, it was but reason, you should have a Taste of it. I know not, how pleasant it may be to your curious, and delicate Palate, but your Piety is such, that you can disrelish nothing that tends to the Exercise of real Godliness.

A Subject indeed, on which Millions of Books are already written; yet such is the Richness of it, that every Day it affords new Matter for Contemplation; and tho' what we write is nothing, but a different Dress of the same good Angel, yet even those different Garbs, and Habits may help towards the Enlargement of its Splendor and Glory. To plant Goodness in Men is without Doubt the indelible Character of our Office, and to make Souls fall in love with Heaven, the Import of that Duty, whereby we hold our Charter; and we have the greater Reason to attempt it in an Age, wherein Religion, like the Poets *Eccho*, is become an empty Sound, and try how far we may bring that Faith into Fashion again, which formerly, when Times were better,

Epistle Dedicatory.

better, discover'd itself in fuitable Works and Actions.

St. *Paul's* Fight with Beasts, one would think, is still intailed upon our Function, and the Difference between his, and ours, seems only this, that he was at *Ephesus*, and ours in the Places where we do Officiate; for the Brutal Lusts of Men are now as strong as ever, and it's hard to say, whether our Task be not the more difficult of the two, since, besides his Preaching, he had the Mantle of *Elijah*, the Power of doing Miracles; and we only the ordinary Assistances of God's Spirit. It's true, the World is Christian now, whereas it was Heathen in his Time; but I cannot tell whether Christianity, mingled with Paganism, in Carriage and Conversation, be not a fiercer Devil to drive out, than meer Heathenism, and Black Infidelity without any White to checker it.

However we have Reason to rely upon his Help, who hath promised to be with us to the World's End; and we find by happy Experience, that our Labours are not altogether unsuccessful, where we aim at God's Glory more than our own Interest.

We are happy in this Church, that we have so many Prelates who are bent upon reviving the Strictness of the Primitive Church, excellent Patterns for us the inferiour Clergy to imitate, and being thus encouraged by our Generals, we must be inexcusable, if having

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such Monitors, we prove careless of our Duty. To reduce Christianity in Men to its Primitive Rule, is the Drift of this Discourse; and as your Lordship's Zeal for such honest Enterprizes cannot be unknown to any, that have had the Honour to converse with you; so whatever Defects may occur in the Book itself, the Scope and Intent being great, I flatter myself, that though I fall short of the Mark I aim at, yet for the Design's Sake, your Lordship will generously pardon all the Faults, and Mistakes of,

My L O R D,

Your Lordship's much Obligated,

and very Humble Servant,

ANTHONY HORNECK.

THE



T H E

PREFACE.



THE Use of new Books, especially upon Subjects of this Nature. I apprehend to be no other than this, That the Newness of them is a Temptation to Men to read them, who many Times will lay aside an Old one, though much better, to peruse a New, and by the Novelty of the Dress, be brought into a good Opinion of a Doctrine, which before, while lying in Moth-eaten Leaves, was insipid and nauseous to their Spiritual Appetite; so that we are forced to make Advantage of their Temper, and continue Writing, in hopes, that by a new Book we may catch them into Seriousness.

*All I have to say concerning this Treatise, is, that it is intended to call Men away from the Shadow, to the Substance of Religion, from a Form, to the Power of Godliness, and from a Notional to a Practtical Belief of
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the Gospel; and though Exercise in an Age so much given to Idleness may possibly sound ill, and some Men that never understood, that Religion required much Labour, will be apt to cry, What will this Babler say? Yet we are not to be laught out of our Christianity by the Talk of Men that have no Mind to be saved, nor is Religion therefore the less painful, because so many Thousands turn it into Formality.

The Judge of Quick and Dead will have another Rule to go by, and it is not the Fancies of Men shall guide him in the passing Sentence in the great Day of Retribution. The World will find, that Heaven takes other Measures than they flatter themselves withal, and it will not serve Turn in that Day to say, that they thought Things would not have been so bad, when in this Life, they might have believed the Gospel, and lived for ever. I know not how the Gospel can be plainer than it is, and when it bids none expect Salvation, but those that do the Will of their Father, which is in Heaven. It must not be Reason, but Stupidity and Sottishness, that can pretend to Ignorance, and as much as this shakes the Foundation of some Men's Faith, it is notwithstanding an everlasting Truth, and when Heaven and Earth shall wax old, as a Garment, this will be found unalterable. The Good God has been at to make us his, lays invincible Obligations

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gations upon us to work the Work of him that sent us hither, and when he hath bought and purchased us at so dear a Rate as his own Blood, either that Report is Fabulous, or the Mercy challenges the strictest Obedience. As we are not to appoint ourselves, our Station, and Condition in the World, so neither are we to do our own Will. We are Servants of God, not only naturally, and born so, but bought with a Price, and therefore have nothing to do with disposing of ourselves, but are to be entirely at his Devotion and Will who bought us for that purpose. Except we do so, we are Rebels, and slight the vast Love, that condescended and stooped to make us happy; and we mistake the Nature of our Being, and the End of the Gospel, if we think we may do what we have a mind to.

Nor doth this make us Slaves, but perfect Freemen, and we are never so much at Liberty, than when we chearfully go on from one Vertue to another. The Truth certainly makes us Free, and the Soul doth but lie shackled and a Prisoner till its Wings serve her to mount up by Contemplation to the Regions of Glory. It is then freest, when like the Bee it can fly from one Flower of Grace unto another, and when it can nimbly run in the way of God's Commands, it may then be truly said to have thrown away its Chains and Manacles. This made Paul and Silas Free, when Bound, and under Custody, and their
joyful

The Preface.

joyful Hallelujahs in a Dungeon, proclaimed their Liberty to be equal to that of Angels.

Till we learn to exercise ourselves unto Godliness, we are Slaves, though clad in Purple, and pitiful Vassals, though deck'd and adorn'd with the richest Oriental Pearls. Godliness must make us Kings, and if ever we inherit the Crown of Glory; this is it, must set it on our Heads. The King's Daughter is all Glorious within, and his Eyes behold the upright. The Furniture God likes, is good Works, and Devotion the Trappings, he delights to look upon. No Jewel's so amiable in his Eye as the Graces of a holy Soul, and her Virtues are the only Embroidery he is pleas'd with. Her Breathings and Pantings after a Crucified Redeemer, are the fine Linnen he loves to see her in; and her Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness, the Silks and glorious Garb, which he opens the Windows of Heaven to behold.

This Vesture, like the Israelite's Garments in the Wilderness, never decays, and no wonder, for it is so like the Garb Men wear in Heaven, that all the Difference is only this, That the Cæstial exceeds this in Perfection; the Ground is the same, but the Gloss of that above is more dazzling, and less subject to Spots and Infirmities.

When will the dull World learn this Truth? When will poor unconverted Sinners
be

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*be convinced of their gross Mistakes? When will they see the Charms that are in Godliness, and fall in love with it? When will they believe our Report, and think that we are the best Friends they have? Can nothing open your Eyes, but Hell? Can nothing move you, but Viols of Wrath? Can nothing prevail with you, but a consuming Fire? Shall this World delude you? Shall your Flesh beguile you? Shall a few Lusts blind you? Will nothing make you wise, but Experience of God's Indignation? Will you count that Godliness your Shame, which the Saints of Old did esteem their Glory? Are you afraid of your own Bliss? Are you afraid of the Love of God? Doth God's willingness to receive you, fright you? Are his Embraces such dreadful Things, that you shun them? Are his Smiles Odious? Doth his Courtship strike Terrour? Are you loath to converse with infinite Beauty? Can the Creature be more lovely than the Creator? Can the Stream be more pleasant than the Fountain? Can sublunary Objects afford any Comfort, and is it possible, that he that made those Comforts should not yield far greater Satisfaction? Have you drudged so long in the Devil's Service, and are you not weary yet? Have you minded your Bodies so long, and do you not think it Time yet to prevent the Ruin of your Souls? O Jerusalem! Wilt not thou be clean? When shall it once be? When shall
the*

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*the Art be set up? When shall Dagon fall?
When shall the Spices flow? When shall
the Fig-tree blossom? When shall the Vine
put forth her tender Grapes?* Wisdom hath
builded her House, she hath hewn out her se-
ven Pillars, she hath killed her Beasts, she
hath mingled her Wine, she hath also furnish-
ed her Table, she hath sent forth her Mai-
dens, she crieth upon the highest Places of
the City, whoso is simple let him turn in hi-
ther; as for him that wants Understanding,
she saith to him come eat of my Bread, and
drink of the Wine, which I have mingled;
forsake the Foolish and live, and go in the
way of Understanding, *Prov. 9. 1—7.*



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THE

THE Best Exercise:

I Tim. IV. 7.

*Exercisethy self rather unto
Godliness.*

THIS Chapter is partly *Prophetical*, partly *Doctrinal*, partly fore-telling what would come to pass in the last Days; partly intimating what Work a Man, who looks for another Life, hath to do, while he sojourns on this side Heaven. In the *prophetick* Part, he acquaints his Trusty Disciple, the Bishop of *Ephesus*, with the strange Degeneracy, and Corruption of Religion, that would ensue in after-Ages, when he should be dead and gone; how Men, under a shew of Christian strictness, would authoritatively prohibit what God had wisely, and like a good and indulgent Father, permitted to his
B Creatures;

Creatures; and under a Pretence of doing more than God hath commanded, set up the Kingdom of the Devil; and by crying out against eating Flesh, and Marriage, discover to the World, that they are more in love with their idle Fancies, and Inventions, than the Will of God, blessed for evermore. Whether in this Prophecy he strikes at the *Encratites*, and *Pythagorean* Christians of old, or at the Modern Church of *Rome*, I will not now undertake to determine.

Whoever they be, he aims at, they are not Men, that by way of Mortification, with a pious Intent to subdue their Lusts, voluntarily abstain from either: For such Spiritual Exercises many good Men, and excellent Servants of God, did always use. That *Daniel* and his Companions, *St. Matthew*, and *St. James*, abstained altogether from Fish and Flesh, and all Things that had Life, is asserted by *Iosephus*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and *St. Austin*; and Ecclesiastical History speaks of *Alcibiades*, *Olympias*, and divers others that lived altogether upon Herbs, and Fruits of the Earth: Some, because they thought it wholesomer; and others, because they look'd upon it, as a Means to promote Religion, and Seriousness, and Heavenly-mindedness; which makes *St. Chrysostom* commend those, that could do so. But these Christians, that were thus temperate, neither condemned those that

that did eat Flesh, nor prescribed these Rules, as necessary to others; much less had they any Abhorrency from Flesh or Marriage, as Things unlawful. Those, the Apostle reproves here, were Men that both commanded such Abstinence, and declared eating Flesh, and Marrying, sinful, and proceeding from the Devil; at least look'd upon the Abstinence as great, and meritorious.

In the *Doctrinal* Part, which begins at the sixth Verse, he considers *Timothy* as a *Christian* and a *Bishop*, and accordingly prescribes to him Canons and Rules to be observ'd by him in that double Capacity. The Church in those Days was already infested by very *Ravenous* Wolves, Men, whom the Devil sent into the World to oppose the Design of Christianity, and to keep deluded Mortals in Sin and Error. These false Prophets, taught by a more Cunning Master, invented various Stratagems, and Ways to undermine the new Profelytes of Christianity. Sometimes they pretended Readiness to teach *gratis*, without Wages, or Salary: Sometimes they would seem to be stricter than the True Apostles: Sometimes they boasted of their Learning and Wisdom, and sought to render the Wisdom of the Cross contemptible: Sometimes they made the World believe, that they knew great Mysteries, Secrets of Divinity, which the True Apostles were ignorant of; and particularly

Simon Magus his Disciples would tell very strange Stories of the Origin, and Cause of Good and Evil, of the Fight or Battel of Angels, and of the Creation of the World, which the Apostle, Verse 7. calls *Profane, and old Wives Fables*, and therefore doth charge *Timothy* to slight, and despise them, and mind nobler Things, even such as tend to the Advancement of God's Glory, and the Church's Good, and his own Joy and Satisfaction in the Day of our Lord Jesus, whereof Spiritual Exercises, and considerable Progresses in the ways of Godliness, are chief, and most desirable, in the Words of the Text, *Exercise thyself rather unto Godliness.*

Before I enter upon any Particulars of this Exercise, I must endeavour to convince my Reader, that this Exhortation concerns all Christians, and not Ministers only, all Men that live under the Sound of the Gospel, and not the Preachers of it altogether. It's true, it is addressed to *Timothy* a Clergy-man, but not as a Bishop, but as a Christian; and the Apostle charges this Duty upon him, not because he was an Evangelist, but because he had embraced the Christian Faith, and been Baptized in the Name of the *Lord Jesus*; and this is evident from hence, because what is here spoken to *Timothy*, is in other Places of Scripture enjoined Believers and Christians in general, *Phil.* 4. 8.

2 *Pet.*

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2 Pet. 1. 5, 6. 2 Pet. 3. 11. Colos. 3. 12, 13, 14, 15, &c. Ephes. 6. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, &c. And it would be as good a Plea, That contentedness and striving against Sin, and loving God, and reading the Holy Scriptures, Meekness, Patience, and a lively Hope, are not Virtues belonging to Lay-men, because they are recommended to *Timothy* in these two Epistles, as to fancy, that this Text imports no universal Obligation.

And this I take notice of on Purpose to prevent an Objection, which lazy and slothful Christians, are apt to make against such necessary Lessons and Injunctions. It's true, Ministers are obliged to excel in Goodness, and to be Patterns to the Flock, in Word, in Conversation, in Spirit, in Faith and Purity, as St. *Paul* speaks, v. 12. of this Chapter; But that doth not excuse the Hearers, or private Christians, from pursuing the same End, or pressing towards the same Mark, but rather enforces the Obligation, because they have such lively Motives before their Eyes, which makes the Apostle call to his Disciples, Phil. 3. 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as you have us for an Ensample:* So that if this Command had been given to *Timothy*, as a Minister of the Gospel, yet the Obligation that lies upon all Christians to imitate their Pastors in their holy Lives, and Acts of Piety, makes this Exercise universally necessary.

Men are generally so enamour'd with Sin, and the World, and the Devil doth so continually buzze the Inconveniencies of Religion, and the Impossibilities of living up to what God commands into their Ears; That they care not, how absurd the Excuse is, they invent, to get their Necks out of Christ's Yoke; so vigorously do they fight against their own Happiness, and so desperately do they thrust away Salvation from them, and let the Shift, or Apology they have for their Neglect, be never so bad or silly, a mere Apron of Fig-leaves, yet that shall serve, rather than they will go without one. They are sensible that the Injunctions of the Gospel are given to rational Creatures, not to Foxes of the Field, not to Fishes of the Sea, nor to Fowls of the Air; and because they would live undisturb'd in their Lusts, unmolested in their Sensualities, and easy in their Pleasures, they flatter themselves, that these stricter Laws, concern only the Ministry, or Men in Black, that have little else to do, but to mind their Books, and their Souls. Indeed if we were the only Men that had Souls to be saved, the Argument would hold good; if Heaven were design'd for none but Priests, much might be said for this Pretence: But when in that Point you are as much concern'd as we; and the Worm that dies not, is described by the Holy Ghost, on purpose, to fright

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fright you as well as us; Look to it, for there is but one Gospel, whereby both Priest and People shall be judged.

Oh Sirs! consider, whether these Excuses will be accepted in the last Day? If Holiness of Life be a Minister's Duty only, what makes you repent on your Death-beds, that you have not minded it more? What makes you send for us to cloath you with the Garments of Righteousness, when your Souls are going to another World? What makes the Apostles write so many Epistles to their Hearers and Disciples? And what makes them fill their Epistles with so many pathetic Exhortations to this Seriousness? Nay, What do you come to Church for? Is it only to hear us talk? Is it only to divert yourselves? Is it only to pass away the Time? Is it not to learn your Work? Is it not to know the Task God requires at your Hands? Is it not to be acquainted with the Will of God, that you may do it? And if so, you bear Witness against yourselves, you condemn yourselves, you acknowledge this Exercise is your Duty, as much as ours. There is never a Sinner of you all, that shall dare to plead in the great Day of Account, that you were not Persons concern'd in this Work, that it was out of your Element, and beyond your Sphere; God will bear Witness, and the Angels will bear Witness, and the Ministers of the Gospel

will bear Witness, and your own Consciences will bear Witness; nay, the Devils themselves will bear Witness, that you were told, assur'd, and convinc'd, that it was to you, that the Message of Grace and Pardon was sent, as well as to us; and that you lay under the same Obligation to fulfil the Conditions, upon which that Pardon is offer'd, that we do.

Who of you desires not to be saved? Hath any of you a mind to be damn'd? Dares any of you refuse the everlasting Mercy of God? Do not you all declare, that you would fain inherit the Kingdom, which fades not away? But shew us one Scripture, one place in the Bible, one Tittle in the Word of God, that favours your Plea, or allows you a different way to Eternal Happiness, than is appointed to the Preachers of the Gospel; and if God be resolv'd, that all that enter into his Joy, shall improve their Talents, work hard, and walk in the same Way; all these Pretences must needs vanish into Smoak, and can be nothing else but Snares of the Devil, and Lime-twigs of the Prince of the Air, to catch your Souls into Ruin, and to deprive them of that Blessing, which must advance them above the profaner Herd, make them equal to Angels, and, what is more, Partakers of the Divine Nature.

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So then, what the Apostle saith here to *Timothy*, he saith unto all, *Exercise thyself unto Godliness*: And I must intreat you to look upon this Exhortation, as spoken to every one of you in particular, and to reflect on the Importance of it, with as much Seriousness, as if *St. Paul* did at this time, from the Mansions of Glory, by a new Commission from Almighty God, call you every one by your Names, *Thou Thomas, John, Daniel, Peter, Ann, Elizabeth, Mary, &c. Exercise thyself unto Godliness*. Fancy you see the Glorious Apostle standing in the Clouds of Heaven, and bespeaking you from the Mouth of him, who is resolved, that not every one that saith to him, *Lord, Lord*, but those that do his Will, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Fancy you hear him cry in your Ears, *Oh mortal Men, whom God so loved, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end, that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life, whom the Son of God is willing to deliver from Sin, and Slavery, and the Bondage of the Devil, from whom he suffer'd Agonies, Wounds, Torments, Shame, Reproaches, and an Ignominious Death, to purchase a Heaven, and an endless Glory for you! every Wound of his calls for his Exercise; every Tear he shed, is to melt you into a holy Willingness to it; every Word he spake, is an Exhortation to it; His Love challenges it; His Labours and*
the

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the Pains he took for you require it; you cannot own him for your Redeemer without it; he cannot save you from your Sins without it: If his Love be not worth this Exercise, it is worth nothing. O deluded Sinners! Will you slight this Mercy? Will you trample on the Blood of Jesus? undervalue his Agonies, or fancy, they deserve no such Exercise? O let not this Love be your Ruin; let not this Mercy be your Damnation; let not this Kindness be the Fuel, that must feed your Fire; let not this Condescension be a Witness against you: you know not what you refuse, when you refuse this Exercise. As you love yourselves, as you tender your eternal welfare, as you would not be counted haters of God, despisers of his Love, Apostates from all Sense of Gratitude; As you look for favour in the last Day, as you hope to see the Face of God in Glory, as you desire to find Mercy of the Lamb, that takes away the Sins of the World: By all that's holy and serious, by the Tears of God's Ministers, and what is dearer to you, your own Interest and by all the Promises and Threatnings of the Gospel, I entreat you, Exercise yourselves unto Godliness. Could you but look into this Heaven, and behold the vast Armies of blessed Souls in this Celestial Quire, here you would find none, but such as did formerly, when on Earth, apply themselves to this Spiritual Exercise; This is the place of Recompence: He that was a stranger to these Exercises on Earth, can expect no Reward in these

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these Regions of Happiness: Here Godliness appears in its greatest Beauty and Glory. As you expect the White Garment, the Royal Garb, the Saints of this Place do wear; as you hope for Abraham's Bosom, where now the once Godly Lazarus lies, O delay not, neglect not to exercise yourselves unto Godliness: And what these Exercises are, is the next thing I am to Treat of.

These Exercises are either ORDINARY, or EXTRAORDINARY; either daily, or to be used but now and then; either constant, or such, as may for some time be intermitted, 'till Necessity, and the Exigency of our Spiritual Condition shall command a Reiteration. I begin with the daily, constant, and ordinary; and they are these following.

I. Exercise.

Praying always. An Exercise injoyn'd by him, who came to call Sinners to Repentance, Luke 18. 3. 1 Thes. 5. 17. Ephes. 6. 18. By Praying always, I mean, to bring ourselves to that Habit of Praying, to that Disposition, and Temper, and Readiness to Pray, as shall put us upon Praying, wherever we are, whatever Company we are in, and whatever we are doing, though not with our Lips, yet in our Minds and Understandings; An Exercise of that Consequence, that this Praying Frame is one of the chief-

*Vid. Cassi-
an, lib. 2.
Instit. c.
10. & Au-
gust. Epist.
ad Pro-
bam.*

chiefest Pillars, and Supporters of a Christian Life: And this the Religious Persons of *Agypt* in *Cassian's* Time did understand so well, that they made exceeding short Prayers, but very frequent; every quarter of an Hour, and oftner sometime, they sent up some Holy Ejaculations to Heaven: And this Art did *Paphnutius* teach *Thais* the Harlot after her Conversion; and *St. Bernard* reports the same of *St. Malachias*. I have read of others, that while they have been in Company of their Neighbours, have in their Minds, offered no less than One Hundred and Three Prayers unto Almighty

** In Imi-
tation pos-
sibly of St.
Bartholo-
mew the
Apostle, of
whom it is
reported
that he
pray'd a
hundred
times a
day.*

God; * and accordingly *Macarius* advised the Man that ask'd him how he should Pray, to repeat very frequently such Words as these in his Mind, *Have Mercy upon me, O Lord, as thou wilt, and think'st most convenient.* In the Lives of the Fathers there is Mention made of one *Moses*, that Pray'd Fifty times a Day; of one *Paulus* that Pray'd Three Hundred times, and of a Virgin that did so Seven Hundred times: Others have gone farther, and lifted up their Hearts to Heaven a Thousand times a Day, as *St. Clara*. These Prayers were only short Ejaculations, used upon all Occasions, Effects of this Praying Frame; and whatever they undertook, they began with a Prayer; and while they were busy in the Works of their Calling, still some
Holy

Holy Aspirations came from them; and if they were reading the Bible, at the end of every Verse their Souls breath'd after God, and in few Words, begg'd some Blessing at his Hand; to which Purpose, St. Ephrem gives this excellent Rule, *Whether you work, or are going to lie down; whether you stand still, or are in a Journey; whether you eat, or drink; whether you are going to sleep, or are waking, take heed you do not forget to pray; whether you are at Church, or at Home, or in the Field; whether you feed Sheep, or build Houses; whether you are at a Feast, or otherwise ingaged, still Pray, and Converse with God.*

S. Ephrem;
c. 1. Hom.
de orand.
Deo.

These short Ejaculatory Prayers, are, by * St. Augustin, justly called Arrows, whereby God's Heart is wounded, and our Hearts are raised into reciprocal Love to God. These are the Prayers which † Tertullian calls, Prayers with a Train, or Retinue of Words. And Isaac the Anchorite, in § Cassian, pure Offerings, Sacrifices with Marrow in them. These are the Works, or Attempts of our Spiritual Bow, as * Justinian phrases them, Darts and Arrows, levell'd against the Enemy; Fiery Desires of the Heart, and the Wishes of Importunate Supplications, which are shot up to Heaven, wound a great way off, fly with great swiftness, keep the Enemy from coming too near, and sometimes at one stroke enervate his

* V. August. Ep. ad Probam.
† Tertul. de Orat. c. 1.
Sine agmine verborum
Oratio.
§ Cassian collat. 9.
c. ult. Sacrificia medullata.
* V. Laurent. Justinian. de intercessionibus.
c. 10.

his Temptations, when he approaches; for seeing the Presence of God in these Ejaculations, he is struck with Horror, and departs.

And this Rule I earnestly entreat my Reader to think of, and put in Practice. Christian, what Difficulty is there in't, before any honest Attempt, or Enterprize, to say in thy Mind, *Lord establish thou the work of our Hands upon us, yea the work of our Hands establish thou it; or if it may not tend to thy Glory, keep it from prospering, and let it not succeed according to my desires?* If thy design be honest and lawful, why shouldest thou be loth to recommend thy Endeavours to the Conduct of Providence? Try it, and thou wilt find what Comfort it will yield in the End. When thou hearest the Clock strike, let thy Mind immediately mount up to Heaven, and say, *Lord, so teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom:* When thou art dressing thyself, *Cloth my Soul with Salvation, and deck me with white Raiments, that the shame of my Nakedness may not appear:* When washing thy Hands and Face, *Bath my Soul in the Blood of Jesus, and wash my Heart from all Iniquity:* When walking, *O Lord, cause me to walk in the way of thy Testimonies, and let me not wander from thy Commandments:* When in Company, *O when will that Joyful Day come, that my Soul shall be gathered to the innumerable Company of Angels,*

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to the general Assembly, and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect. When writing, Lord put thy Laws in my heart, and write them upon my mind. When Reading, O make me to understand the way of thy Precepts, so shall I talk of thy wonderful Works. When Rising, O let me awake unto Righteousness, and arise from the dead, that Christ may give me light. When lying down, O cause me to lie down in the green pastures of thy Mercy, lead me beside the still waters of thy Comforts, and restore my Soul. When kindling a Fire, O shed abroad thy love in my Heart, and raise such Flames within, as may burn up all my dross, and all my filth. When lighting a Candle, O give me the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, and enlighten mine Eyes, that I may see what the Hope of thy calling is, and what the Riches of thy Grace are. When Eating or Drinking, O let it be my Meat, and Drink to do thy Will; feed me with the Bread which came down from Heaven, and give me to drink of that Water, whereof whoever drinks shall never thirst again. When Riding out, O thou that ridest upon the wings of the Wind, shew thyself, conquer my Corruption, and trample all my Sins under thy Feet. When taking the Air, Come, Holy Spirit, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices may flow out; make my mind calm, serene, and quiet; breathe upon me, and re-
vice

give me with the light of thy Countenance. When visiting a sick Neighbour, O do thou make all his Bed in his sickness, and give me Grace to speak a Word in season to him, and cause all thy Goodness to pass before him. When beholding Trees, and Plants, and Flowers, Lord, how wonderful are all thy Works! In Wisdom hast thou made them all, the Earth is full of thy Riches. O make me as a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, which may bring forth its Fruit in due Season. When going to speak to a great Man, Over-awe me with thy Presence, Lord, that I may not comply with any Evil, but may fear thee more than Men. When going by Water, O satisfy my Soul with the Fatness of thy House, and make me to drink of the River of thy Pleasures. When Buying or Selling, Lord, prevail with me to keep a Conscience void of offence toward God, and toward Man. When standing in thy Shop, How amiable are thy Tabernacles, Lord God of Hosts! O let me ever love the Habitation of thy House, and the place where thine Honour dwelleth. When hearing thy Neighbour Curse, or Swear, O Lord, lay not this Sin to his Charge: Father, forgive him, for he knows not what he doth. When hearing any Good of thy Friend, or Acquaintance, O let him grow in Grace, and go on from Vertue to Vertue, and make him fruitful in every good Word and Work. When seeing any one that's Blind, or Lame, or Dumb, O Lord,

vid. Misna

Beracoth.

c. 4. Sect.

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O Lord, make these distressed Creatures recommends for these Defects some other Way; make the Eye of their Faith quicker, their inward Man stronger, and their Hope more lively, and visit them more powerfully with thy Salvation. When looking upon a Dunghill, O make me to know myself, and discover to me my false deceitful Heart, and the Odiousness, and Loathsomeness of my Sins, that I may hate them with a perfect Hatred. When beholding the Sun, O Thou Son of Righteousness, rise upon me with Healing under thy Wings, and warm my Soul with thy radiant Beams, that I may love Thee better than Father and Mother, better than all that's dear and pleasing to me here below. When looking upon a House, O my God, make me in love with that City, which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God: O when shall this Earthly House of my Tabernacle be dissolved, and I received into that Building of God, the House, not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens! When seeing other Men laugh at any Sin, Lord, let Rivers of Tears run down mine Eyes, because Men do not keep thy Law: O give me that Tenderness of Heart, that I may be concern'd at other Mens Sins, as well as mine own. When beholding any Children, or Infants, O Lord, out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings do thou prepare Praises unto thyself; let these Children grow up as the Lillies, and spread their Branches as the Cedars

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Etc.
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tur, Etc.

Cedars of Libanon. When going to visit a Friend, *Lord, make him thy Friend; and that he may be so, encourage, and assist him to do whatsoever thou commandest him.* When reproved by another, *Lord, let this Reproof be as an excellent Oyl to me; give me Grace to take it in good Part; let my Soul thrive by it; let it heal my Wounds, and make me thankful for this Opportunity.* When receiving any Injury, or ill Language, *Sweet Jesu, give me Grace to follow thy Example, and to tread in thy Steps who being reviled, didst not revile again; and when thou wast threatned, sufferdest it, committing thyself to Him, that judges righteously.* When seeing it Snow, *Purge me with Hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow.* When seeing it Rain, *O visit me with the former and latter Rain of thy Favour, and make my Heart rich with thy Showers that I may bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit.* When despised for Righteousness Sake, *O let me esteem the Reproach of Christ greater Riches than all the Treasures of the World.* When it Thundereth, *O Lord, the Power of thy Thunder who can understand! Let the World take Notice of the Voice of God, and the Inhabitants of the Earth learn Righteousness.*

I have been the more prolix in particularizing these Ejaculations of the Mind, and these Aspirations of the Heart, in the various Contingencies, Accidents, Providences, and

and Actions of our Lives, because I would help the Ignorant, and take away all Colour of Excuse, and destroy all Pretences of Impossibility of this Exercise. Use will make it easy: And, Sirs, if ever you would learn to converse with God, or to have your Conversation in Heaven: If ever you would get a Fore-taste of the Joys to come: If ever you would make Religion your Business: If ever you would conquer the Lusts of the Flesh: If ever you would extinguish vain and evil Thoughts: If ever you would arrive to a sound Mind, and that inward Spiritual Worship of God, without which Christ says, None can please him: If ever you would learn to conquer Temptations: If ever you would have your Souls become strong, lusty, and vigorous in the Ways of God; This is the Way, even this, Praying without Ceasing. This is the best Antidote against Sin, the best Medicine to cure all Spiritual Diseases: It doth not hinder you in the Works of your Calling, but rather furthers and sanctifies them; nor can it be uneasy to the Mind, except it be to the unwilling Mind; and it keeps out the Devil better than St. *Teresa's* Holy Water, or St. *Anthony's* Sign of the Cross.

*Teresa. vit.
c. 31. Eccl.
Athanas.
vit. S. An-
tonii.*

I know, what will be pleaded here, That this is to make Religion burthenfome, a Yoke indeed, and at this Rate you shall never enjoy yourselves. But give me Leave

to ask you, What kind of Religion would you have? Would you be religious, and dissolute? Would you be good, and have Elbow-room in Sin? Would you be pious, and be kept within no Bounds? Cannot you enjoy yourselves, without you may be licentious? Would you be happy, and suffer no Restraint to be laid upon your sensual Pleasures? If this be a Yoke, there have been those before your Time, that have cheerfully drawn in it, and thought themselves most blessed for having the Honour of the Employment. It is a Yoke, the Son of God hath taken upon Himself, and which all the Apostles, whose Memories you celebrate, and whose Actions you admire, have imitated their Great Master in. Would you be his Disciples, and live as you please? Are you proud of being his Followers, and scorn his Laws? Do you Glory in his Salvation, and are you loth to follow his Example? Would not you deny yourselves in your Ease for a Crown of Glory? Would you have all that the World affords, and all that Heaven affords? Would you live easy here, and easy hereafter too? Would you lie in the Lap of sensual Delights here, and from thence slide into the Bosom of everlasting Mercy? Is it Rational to believe, that the Spiritual Delights above are purchased by brutish, and beastly ones on Earth? He that will have his Fill of this World, must

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must not expect Fulness of Joy in the next. He that will welcome the Pleasures of Sin and Lust here, must not think to drink of the Rivers of God's Pleasure hereafter. He that means to rejoyce hereafter, must mourn here. He that means to laugh in the next World, must weep in this: *Son, remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedst thy good Things, and likewise Lazarus evil Things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented, saith Abraham to Dives, Luke 16. 25.*

The Prayer.

O God, Gracious and Merciful! who givest Power to the Weak, and Strength to the Feeble; who knowest the Backwardness of my Heart, and the Unwillingness of my Soul to Spiritual Duties; who understandest all my Wants, and art acquainted with all my Weaknesses, behold how loth my Soul is to have her Conversation in Heaven, and what Excuses my Flesh makes to hinder my Mind from frequent Addresses to thy Mercy-seat. I entreat thee to apply thy healing Hand to my sickly Soul, and to fill it with Spiritual Desires. O give me a praying Spirit, and let my Soul follow hard-after thee! Teach me to make a Spiritual Use of every Thing, and instruct me to see the Creator in the Creature. Lord, free my Spirit from the Bondage of the Flesh,

The Best Exercise.

that it may mount up cheerfully to thy Throne upon all Occasions. Direct my Mind to look up in all my Actions, and let me take Notice of the Operations of thy Hand in all Occurrences whatsoever. Let thy good Spirit help my Infirmities; and when I know not what to say, my dearest Lord, suggest unto me how to fill my Mouth with Arguments. Acquaint me with the Art of extracting Good out of every Thing. O that I had that Spiritual Temper, which might incline me to think of God, when ever I behold the Works of Creation and Providence! How Sweet is it to walk with God! O let no Company be so pleasing to me as Thine! Make me desirous to embrace all Opportunities to reflect on thy Perfections and Excellencies. Thou hast both commanded and promised Spiritual Wisdom; O bestow upon me that excellent Gift, that I may know, how to glorify Thee in this World, and arrive at last to that Glory which thou hast promised to them that overcome, and continue faithful unto Death, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. Exercise.

Every Morning, when we have paid our Homage to God, by Prayer and Thanksgiving, to resolve, and solemnly resolve to tie ourselves to certain Rules of living that Day; An Exercise recommended to us, Psal. 17. 3, 4. Psal. 76. 11. Psal. 57. 7, 8. Psal. 119. 101, 106. To this purpose Pliny saith of the
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The Best Exercise.

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Christians in Trajan's Time, That they used to oblige or bind themselves by an Oath in the Morning, before they went about their Business, not to sin, not to cheat, not to lye, not to steal, not to keep any Thing unjustly from their Neighbours: And this Exercise was observed many hundred Years before that Time by David, Psal. 5. 2. where our Translation renders it, In the Morning will I direct my Prayer unto Thee, and will look up: but the Original runs thus: In the Morning I do order, or dispose myself to Thee, or towards Thee, and watch, as a Man from a high Tower watches, and observes the Motion of the Enemy. Not, but that our Translation reaches *David's* Sense well enough; but it doth not so fully express it, as it might have done. He had, in the foregoing Words, spoken of his Prayer in the Morning; and behold, what he presently subjoins to that Duty! When I have done this, I then resolve how to order my Conversation that Day, and how I may please God; and consider, how I may best watch against those Corruptions which do most easily beset me. The Truth is, Men running Abroad abruptly, without any previous Consideration of what they mean to do for their Souls that Day, must needs continue Strangers to that Spiritual Life, our Profession obliges us to; for this makes them rush into Sin, as the Horse rushes into the Battle, having no Bridle to restrain,

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strain, no Curb to keep them in Order, no solemn Resolutions upon their Souls to check, and govern themselves; whereas, if before I venture upon any wordly Business, or Work of my Calling, I do solemnly resolve, in the Presence of Almighty God, *This Day do I seriously intend thus and thus to behave myself, by the Blessing and Assistance of Almighty God; I resolve, If a Neighbour, or any other Person, should be very angry, or insolent with me, to answer him with Meekness and Gentleness: If I meet with Success in my Business, as soon as I come Home, I will enter into my Chamber, and praise the Great Giver of every good Thing: If I am tempted to go into Company, and have Reason to suspect, they'll draw me into Sin, I'll refuse to go, though they revile, and abuse me for it never so much: Or if I go into any Company, I'll speak but little, or will endeavour to divert any vain Discourse to more sa-
 voury Subjects. If a Man speak Ill of me, I'll be sure not to speak Ill of him again: If I meet with any ill Language, I'll keep my Mouth as it were with a Bridle. Yesterday committed such an Errour, against this Fault I'll watch to Day, and strive to reform my Inclinations. If my Servants, or my Children do Things undecent, or unlazeful, I will certainly reprove them with Tenderness and Compassion. If I meet with Objects of Charity. I'll relieve them according to my Abili-
 ty;*

ty; or if I meet with none, I'll seek out, and enquire for some to whom I may express my Love, and Christian Compassion. If I am ask'd a Question, which I know not how to answer readily, without telling a Lye, I am resolved either to be silent, or to take Time to consider of an Answer that I may not be surpriz'd into an Untruth.

If I resolve thus, before I set about any of my secular Affairs, I set up a kind of *Remembrance-Office* in my Soul, and constitute a Monitor in my Conscience, that will put me in Mind of my Obligations, and pull me back, when my sensual Appetite would push me on to Sin.

To make this Exercise more effectual, select two or three of *Christ's* Precepts every Morning, and resolve to live up to them strictly, so long, till you have conquered yourselves, and made the Practice of them familiar to you; and when you are arrived to a Facility, and Love of such Duties, set yourselves another Task, and make Choice of two or three other Lessons, especially of the greater and weightier Sort, and observe the same Method. By Example, I seriously resolve this Day to Observe three Rules; *To speak Evil of no Man; to Praise God seven Times with David; to shun the Occasion of such a Sin*, suppose Anger, or Hatred to my Neighbour. Thus I will resolve every Morning, before I settle to any Work, 'till these Duties

Duties become easy and pleasing to me; and when my Soul begins to delight in them, I'll then appoint me another Task in the Morning, resolve to be cautious of promising; and if I promise, to keep strictly to my Promise; to deceive no Man, though it were never so much for my Profit and Interest; or to have good Discourses at my Table: And till I were Master of these Vertues too, I would go on in my Resolutions every Morning; and if I broke, or acted contrary to them at any Time, I would renew them next Day with greater Vigour and Earnestness. This is it partly, which *Solomon* means, *Eccles. 11. 6.* *In the Morning sow thy Seed:* And from these Pains in the Morning, before we go Abroad, we may promise ourselves an excellent Harvest all the Day. To this End, it will be necessary to consider, what Sins we are most prone, and inclined to, that we may resolve particularly against such, and arm ourselves against them. And to this Purpose I have read of one *Sylvanus*, that he always began his Work in the Morning, with these Holy Purposes, *To censure no Body that Day, but to reflect always on his own Sin, whenever he met with a Temptation to judge his Brother; Not to hate any Person for his Sin, but to pity him, and to pray for him: To think of the Day of his Death, and not to rejoyce at any Thing that was Evil:* Whence it came to pass, that he arrived to
that

that Perfection of Grace, that like another *Abraham*, he became a Father of the Faithful, and able to comfort them, which were in any Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith himself was comforted of God, to use *St. Paul's* Expression, *2 Cor. 1.4.*

Where People venture out, without putting on this Armour of God, this Shield of Faith, and this Breast-plate of Righteousness; no wonder if they expose themselves to the fiery Darts of the Devil, and the Insolence of that roaring Lion, which walks about, seeking whom he may devour; such a Soul lies open to his Incurfions, and having no Hedge to fence it, *The Boar out of the Wood doth waste them, and the wild Beast of the Field devours them, as David speaks, Psal. 86.*

13. Such Resolutions in the Morning, are a Wall about the Soul, and the Devil cannot easily climb it: The Sight of it weakens his Attempts, and he is afraid of approaching it, as much, as once he was of coming near the Cell of Holy *Sophronius*. These are the Bulwarks, that fright the Slaves of Hell; and where they see such Citadels built against their Fury, their Courage fails them; or where they assail the Fort, it is but with Fear and Trembling. Such Resolutions shew that we do not take up Religion out of Custom, but upon serious Deliberation, and Persuasion, that this is the one Thing necessary, and

*Mosch.
Prat. Spin.
c. 159.*

and that the Fear of God hath our chiefest Care, and is the Beginning of our Wisdom; a Temper, without which, God rejects our Service, and hides his Face from our customary Devotions, and gives them no other Welcome, but this, *Who hath required this at your Hands?*

Sirs, you propose in a Morning to dispatch such and such of your worldly Affairs that Day; Why should you not purpose to do something more than ordinary for God, or for your Souls, every Day? How come your Spiritual Concerns to deserve so little Care? Why must ye needs be slovenly and careless in this Particular? Is not your Soul more than your Trade, and your eternal Welfare, more than a livelyhood on Earth? Why of all Things must your Souls, and your God be neglected? *Laban* was more concern'd for his God, than for his Sheep and Oxen; Shall an Idolater mind his Idol, more than you the Great God of Heaven, and Earth? You complain you cannot conquer your Corruptions; How should you conquer, when you do not strive? How should you strive, if you enter into no Holy Purposes, to arm yourselves against the Sins of the Day? Are Corruptions blown away with a Breath? Or Lusts that are deeply rooted, expelled with Sighs and Wishes? Did you ever know Cedars fall with the
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Touch of a Hand? Or did ever Children with a Switch, strike a sturdy Oak out of its Place? Will your Sins leave you when you do not think of them? Or, will these Foes ever yield, while you make no War against them? Do you think the Devil values your Souls as little as yourselves; or do you fancy that strong Man will leave his Habitation, except you come against him with Swords and Axes? *Canst thou draw Leviathan with a Hook, or his Tongue with a Cord, which thou lettest down? Canst thou put a Hook into his Nose, or bore his Jaw through with a Thorn? Wilt thou play with him as with a Bird? Or wilt thou bind him for thy Maidens?*

With what Faces can you confess your Sins at Night, when your Consciences tell you, and cannot but fly into your Faces, and convince you, that you did do nothing to prevent them; that you left yourselves naked, and exposed to the Assault of Temptations, and would take nothing to preserve you from the Infection? What do you confess your Sins for, but to be better? And if to be better, how is it possible you should be so, without you defend and guard your Souls, by such holy Purposes the next Day? Do you make Confession of Sin a Business of Custom only? Do you make no more than a Formality of it? How shall God forgive you?

you? How shall he pardon you for your Transgressions, while you do not study and contrive next Day, how you shall be rid of those Sins, which the Night before, you professed your Sorrow for? Do you think God will be put off with Shadows, and the Almighty impos'd upon with counterfeit Devotion? Have you liv'd so long under the Gospel, and have learn'd Christ no better? Have you conversed with Ministers so long, and are no better Scholars? The Devil himself cannot but smile, to see how ridiculously you go to Work, to see you content yourselves with the bare Confession, and take no care to tear the pernicious Weeds from your Hearts; these Holy Purposes in the Morning, would shake the evil Tree, and by Degrees so weaken it, that it would fall of itself; If therefore you would not make a Jest of Religion; If you would not play with your Confessions; If you would not turn your Duties into Ridicule; for God's Sake, enter into

Ruffin. vit. patr. l. 3. p. 38. Protestations against your Sins every Morning, lest you increase your Guilt, and like the *Æthiopian* in the Fable, who thought he should carry his Burthen better, if he made it greater, you add Sin unto Sin.

The Prayer.

O Thou who dwellest in the Heavens, and yet humblest thyself to behold the Ways of the Children of Men! Thou hast been graciously pleased to reveal thy Will to me, and given me Rules to walk by; Rules, which if a Man follows, he shall live for ever. How sweet are thy Testimonies? They enlighten the Eyes, and give Understanding to the Simple. How Glorious is that Soul in thy Sight, that makes thy Will a Lanthorn to her Feet, and a Light unto her Paths! Lord, in these pleasant Paths I desire to walk; there is nothing like them. They end in Peace. I read of those who have found it so, they could not be mistaken. Thy Spirit inflamed their Souls. They have ventured their Lives to attain unto it. O the Serenity! O the Calmness of Mind! O the inward Joy, they found by walking in the Paths of Righteousness! Why should not I take of this Tree of Life, as well as they, and live! This, O Lord, I often think of, and see great Loveliness in all this: But my Will is weak, my Resolutions faint: When I resolve, I meet with Waves and Billows, that dash my Resolutions. O thou, whose Power is infinite, open thy Store-house, and furnish me with Weapons to defend myself against all Assaults from the World, and the Devil! O strengthen these feeble

feeble Knees: Hold up these weary Hands. I desire to follow thee; let thy Spirit lift me up, and cause me to run. Touch my Will with thy Sceptre, that it may bow to thy Commands. Manifest thy Power in my Weakness; give me Courage to purpose, and to fulfil my Purposes. When I would flinch in my Resolutions, do thou support me. When my Will would start back like a broken Bow, come in with thy Salvation. Endow me with Power from on High; through thee I shall do valiantly; through thee I shall be able to overcome all Difficulties. O leave not my Soul in Misery: Send from above and take me; draw me out of many Waters; send out thine Arrows, and scatter my vain Imaginations. With thee I will run through a Troop, by my God will I leap over Walls and Impediments. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy Name's Sake, and for thy Righteousness Sake, bring my Soul out of Trouble. Teach me to do thy Will, for thou art my God, thy Spirit is good; lead me into the Land of Uprightness, for thy Mercies Sake, for Christ's Sake. Amen.

III. *Exercise.*

Every Day to spend half an Hour, or some such Time, in thinking of some good Thing: An Exercise insisted on in this Chapter, v. 15. and Psal. 1. 2. Phil. 4. 8. I mention half an Hour, because it is not easily to be conceived, how any Meditation can be effectual,

effectual, or do good upon the Soul, if Men do not think it worth bestowing so much Time at least upon't. Meditation is that noble Power, whereby we are distinguished from Brutes, and irrational Animals, and our being able to think, and with our Thoughts to dwell upon any Divine Object, shews, that we participate of the Nature of Angels. And there is such great variety of Heavenly and Spiritual Objects, that every Day we may pitch upon a new Theme, every Day smell to a new Flower, and with the Day, change the Subject of our Contemplation.

On *Sunday*, or the *Lord's-day* rather, we may let our Hearts dwell on the everlasting Kingdom of Heaven, and the vast Glory of the World to come; who they are, that shall enjoy it, on what Terms that Crown may be purchased; the Transcendency of that Felicity, above all that the World can call Rich, and Beautiful, and Glorious; How pleasant that Life will be, how free from Hunger and Thirst, and Cold and Nakedness; from all Possibility of Sin, and Danger, from Death and Sorrow, and Sadness; from Anxiety, Corruption, Perturbation; from Changes, and Sickness, and Weakness, and Infirmities; from Fear, and Storms, and Tempests; from the Assaults of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; how full of Love, and Delight, and Ravishment it will be; how sweetly the

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weary Soul will rest in the Bosom of everlasting Mercy; how Glorious a Sight the new *Jerusalem* will be; how reviving a Spectacle, to behold the Guard-Royal of Angels, shining in Robes of Light: The noble Army of Martyrs; the goodly Fellowship of Patriarchs, and Prophets; and what is more, Christ, as Man, glorified with his Father's Glory, shining like the Sun in his Meridian Lustre, and calling to his Triumphant Church, *Behold, thou art Fair my Love, thou hast ravish'd my Heart! How fair is thy Love, my Sister, my Spouse! How much better is thy Love than Wine? And the Smell of thy Ointment than all Spices? Who is she that looks forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners? Thy Lips, Oh my Spouse, drop as the Honey-comb; Honey and Milk are under thy Tongue; and the smell of thy Tongue, is like the smell of Libanon.*

As Meditation and Prayer are near a Kin, and never so useful, as when they shine in Conjunction; so this, as well as the following Meditations, being seconded with holy Aspirations, will have very considerable Effects on the Soul. Of these Aspirations I shall give some Patterns.

I.

O God! thou most sweet, thou most lovely Object! How do those glorified Saints that enjoy thee in the other World, regard our little Pleasures and Satisfaction here! O that my Soul were with those Spirits of Men made perfect! I see nothing in this Valley of Tears that's worth desiring or breathing after. The Beatitude to come, is that I long for. What are the Glories of this World, to that Glory, which e'er long shall be revealed in us! The Magnificence of Triumphs, the Pomp of Princes, the Curiosity of Palaces, the Beauty of the Sun, the Brightness of the Moon, the Glistering of the Stars, the Variety of Flowers, the Fragrancy of Herbs, what are all these to the Joys and Glories at thy right Hand for evermore! One Day in thy Courts above, is sweeter than a thousand here. There I shall behold the Perfection of thy Essence, the Infinity of thy Nature, the Immensity of thy Grandeur, the Eternity of thy Duration, the Greatness of thy Majesty, the Stability of thy Throne, the vast Extent of thy Wisdom, the Abyss of thy Judgments, the Sweetness of thy Bounty, the Tenderness of thy Mercy, the Severity of thy Justice, the Latitude of thy Power, the Charms of thy Beauty, and the Lustre of thy Glory! O what a ravishing Sight will this be! And shall I be afraid of encountering with Enemies,

that would keep me from seeing these wonderful Objects? These Enemies are already conquered. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah hath already weaken'd their Strength and Power, which makes my Victory more easy; therefore I will not despair. O thou who hast promised, that when the Poor and Needy want Water, thou the God of Israel wilt hear them. Hear me from thy holy Heaven, and encourage my Soul to force her way through all Difficulties. Give me lively Apprehensions of that State. For want of those lively Apprehensions, I work not, I move not, I press not forward, I act not like a Person that is in good earnest, my Endeavours are dull, and my Attempts feeble; O write that Bliss upon my Mind, engrave it on my Soul; Let the Beams of it warm my Spirit, that no Labour for Heaven may seem hard, no Commandment grievous, no Exercise troublesome, no Industry tedious, no Pains too great, no Journey too long, that I may not murmur, that I may not complain of Difficulties, that I may not be weary, that I may not faint in my Mind; It is not only a glorious Garment, not only a magnificent House, not only a stately Palace that's promised me, but Glory itself, and Magnificence itself, and Splendor itself. What if I must curb my Passions, and break through my sinful Inclinations? What if I must withdraw mine Affections from the Creature, and mortify my Body? What if I must submit my Will

to thy Will, and pardon the greatest Injuries? What if I must get Habits of Vertue, give Law to my Tongue, prescribe Limits to my Thoughts, put a Restraint upon my foolish Desires in order to this Glory? Is not the promised Recompence Encouragement enough? O my God! thou art my Shield and exceeding great Reward! and shall I be afraid to serve thee? Shall I tremble at the Work thou settest me? Will not thy Wages be infinitely beyond my Labour? How short will be my Task, and how long my Rest! How few will be the Days I am to work in, and how durable my Repose! Shall I think Heaven too dear at the Price thou hold'st it at! O undeceive me; pull down the vain Conceits I have harboured; shine powerfully upon my Soul, that I may be insatiable in my Desires after it, and long to see thee, who art Light itself, and in thy Light may see Light, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II.

O Most Happy, most Blessed, and most Glorious God! How can I reflect on the Rest of this Day without summoning my Thoughts to survey the nobler Rest, whereof this present is but an Emblem! I have gone this Day with the Multitude to the House of God; but what is this to the Company, I shall e'er long meet in Heaven, if I imitate them in their Severities here! Happy Society! where is no Chaff among the Corn, no Tares among

the Wheat, no Thistles among the Roses? Where all are Children of God, all are Kings, all are Saints; all are full of Grace and Glory, all are Wise, all Courteous, all Affable, all adorn'd with celestial Qualities! If I take such Pleasure in the Conversation of a Wise, Discreet, and prudent Man here, what Delight shall I take in the Company of the wisest, holiest, and most accomplish'd Souls, that want nothing, that have all things, that abound in Knowledge, in Prudence, in Wisdom, and in Sanctity! How do I admire Men of great Parts and Abilities here! In what Admiration then will my Soul be, when it shall converse with Persons deckt with the Light of God's Glory! Who know all Things without reading, understand the greatest Mysteries without studying, comprehend the abstrusest Things without Labour; who forget nothing, whose Memory never decays, whose Parts never fail, who know without Errour, apprehend without Doubting, understand with Assurance, and perceive with the greatest Evidence imaginable; who can unfold all Riddles, resolve all Difficulties, answer to all Questions, and think and speak nothing but Truth; whose Minds know no Darknes, whose Understandings are free from Clouds, whose Knowledge is eternal! How can they but be happy, when the Place where they for ever live is so! How can they but know the deep Things of God, when God is
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the Glass in which they behold all Mysteries! O my God, make me in love with that Place, where I shall love thee perfectly; where my Soul shall be eternally united to thee, where it cannot but love thee, cannot but embrace thee, and cannot but be ravished with thee for ever. If they who running in a Race, strive for the Mastery, are temperate in all Things, shall not I be so? If they mortify themselves to gain a corruptible Crown, shall not I do so much to gain an Incorruptible! What Pains do ungodly Sinners take to get to Hell, and shall not I be at some Cost and Charge to get to Heaven! O Lord, let it never be said of me, that I valued thy Heaven less, than other Men do the Devil's Kingdom! Thou offerest me the Honour to reign with thee for ever; and in order thereunto requirest nothing of me, but to reign over myself on this side Heaven! Thou bid'st me rule my Lusts, and shall I indulge them? Thou bid'st me curb my vain Desires, and shall I cherish them in my Bosom? Thou bid'st me triumph over my Flesh, and shall I set it on the Throne? Thou bid'st me subdue my worldly Inclinations, and shall I give them Entertainment? How great are the Glories thou intendest me! And shall I deprive myself of them out of love to Slavery and Bondage? O give me Courage to command myself! O let me not be afraid of displeasing myself! My dearest Lord, teach me so to rule my outward and inward Man, that I may rule at

last with my blessed Redeemer for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

On Monday we may reflect on the last Judgment, how the Lord Jesus, for all the seeming Delay, shall be e'er long revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them, that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; How the King of Heaven will then sit upon the Throne of his Glory, and before him will be gathered all Nations, and how he will separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divides his Sheep from the Goats; how he'll set the Sheep on his right Hand, and the Goats on the left; and say to them on his right Hand, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World; for I was an hungred, &c.* but to them on his left, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels:* How different Mens Notions and Apprehensions of God's Mercy and Justice will be then, from what they are now; What Amazement, the careless besotted World will be in then; how those Men that spend their Days in Jollity, and brutish Pleasures now, will then be forced into Despair, and be ready to tear themselves, and call to Rocks and Mountains, *Fall on us, and hide us from the Face of Him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb:* How all then will look with

with another Face; how the humble self-denying Christian, that is now the hissing and off-scouring of the World, will then be exalted above all Heavens, and seated in the same Throne with the Son of God; and how all those mighty nothings, that scorn and laugh now at the Religious Soul, will tremble in that Day, like an Aspen-leaf, and wish that they had consider'd the things which belonged to their everlasting Peace, while the Candle of the Lord shined over their Heads, and God caressed them to their Happiness.

And this Meditation, also will thrive better, if water'd with such devotional Breathings, as follow:

I.

Great, All-seeing, and Almighty Judge of the World, before whom all Mankind must e'er long appear! Righteous art thou in all thy Ways, and holy in all thy Works. If the Righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall I a poor Sinner appear! I that have so long, so frequently neglected my Duty, delayed my Repentance, undervalued thy Mercies, despised thy Patience, and abused the Riches of thy Grace and Favour! O Lord! how watchful should I be over myself, if the Terrors of the great Day of Account appear'd to me in lively Characters! O dreadful Day! when I a poor Wretch must stand before thy Tribunal, and see myself surrounded with
cast

east Legions of Angels, all expecting to hear what my Sentence will be! This Day I talk of. This Day I have frequently in my Mouth; but O that my Soul were frightened more with the Mention and Consideration of it! I should not then lead so easy and so soft a life; I should then spend more time in Weeping and Praying; I should then be afraid of defiling my Soul with the least Spot of Sin. Lord Jesu! Great Saviour of the World! look upon me, and let me feel thy Power in my Soul. Come, Lord! represent this Day to my Mind in all its Terroures and Circumstances, that I may make haste to enter into thy rest. The Judge is at the Door, let me bring Presents to him that ought to be feared; and since no Gift is so pleasing to thee, as a Heart entirely devoted to thy Service; O perswade me, O help me, O assist me to mind the one Thing necessary, and to chuse the better Part, which may never be taken away from me, for thy Name sake, for thy Mercies sake, for thy Merits sake. Amen.

II.

O Thou Omniscent, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent Being, who hast appointed a Day wherein thou wilt judge the Secrets of Mens Hearts, and all their Words and Actions, and Desires, by thy Gospel. I believe, this Day will come, a Day when pure Hearts will be esteemed more than eloquent Speeches, and

and a good Conscience will go farther than Purſes of Gold. Thou, Lord, givest me frequent Warnings of the Approaches of this day! My Conscience puts me in mind of it. The Sicknesſes and Calamities thou ſendeſt upon me, tell me of it: My Heart miſgives me that I am not ſafe, that my Soul is in danger, and that my eternal Interest is not yet ſecured. O my God, who art not tired with the Prayers of thy Servants, nor diſpleaſed with the Importunities of thy Children. I earneſtly beg, it is the Deſire of my Soul to be enliven'd and awaken'd into a Senſe of this Day, that to Day while I hear thy Voice I may not harden my Heart. I have delay'd my ſerious Care of a future Happineſs too long, too long indeed! O that mine Eyes were Fountains of Tears to weep for this neglect! I am ſenſible I muſt not trifle any longer. I muſt not defer a Concern of that Importance to another Day. O my God, let me admire thy Patience, that I have liv'd unto this Hour, and accept of my Sacrifice, of the Remainder of my Days, which I humbly conſecrate to thee, with Faith and Love in Chriſt Jeſus. O let this future Judgment over-awe my careleſs Soul, when I ſpeak, when I think, when I follow my lawful Calling, when I am in Company, when I am alone, when I walk, when I ſit, when I ſtand, and let me ever fear that Judge who hath Power to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell, that both my Soul
and

*and Body may be preserved from Damnation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

On *Tuesday*, we may take God's various Mercies and Providences, into serious Consideration, what Preservations; what Deliverances we have met withal; what Care God hath taken of us from time to time; how he hath been with us, when we have gone through the Water, and when we have passed through the Fire, hath commanded the Flames not to kindle upon us; how ready he hath been to assist us in the fiery Furnace; how miraculously he hath appeared in our Rescue, when the Fig-tree hath not Blossom'd, when there hath been no Fruit in the Vine, and when the Labour of the Olive hath failed, and when all Creature-Comforts have failed, how often he hath been our Strength, and our Portion, our Refuge, and our Hiding-place; how beneficial such a Providence hath been to us; what good we have got by such an Affliction; how excellent the Designs of God are in the Troubles he sends upon us; how much safer an afflicted Condition is, than a Prosperous; how kind he hath been, in causing us to be born in a Christian Country, and in a Religion free from those gross Errors, and Superstitions, that other nominal Christians do sink into, or labour under; what a Mercy his Word, his Gospel, and all his Laws, and Revelations are; what Assistances, what Comforts, what Checks of Conscience,

Conscience, what Motions of God's Spirit we have found, and how God hath done more for us, than we have been able to think, or to express.

Even this Speculation will turn to excellent Nourishment, if joined with such Ejaculations, as these :

I.

O Lord! how wonderful are all thy Works, in Wisdom hast thou made them all, the Earth is full of thy Riches! What a Monument am I of thy Mercy! How kind hast thou been to this miserable Creature! How am I bound to magnify thy Goodness! How excellent, how great, how vast, how large, how diffusive is it! not confin'd to a Day, not restrain'd to a Place, not limited to an Hour! From my Cradle unto this Moment I have seen, and tasted how sweet, and how gracious thou art. Thou hast carried me on thy Wings, as the Eagle doth her young; thorough the various Stages of my Life, what Miracles of Providences have mine Eyes beheld! How hath thy Providence been at work for me, while I have been Asleep, while I have been thinking, and contriving something else, even how to derogate from thy Honour and Glory! Truly Lord! thy Mercy and Patience ought to be my Song in the House of my Pilgrimage! This I have Reason to boast of, to speak of, to meditate of Day and Night;
by

by that I subsist, by that I am supported, fed, maintain'd, and preserv'd from the Clutches of the Devil. O let thy Mercy melt my Heart! O let Mercy prevail with me to give up myself to thee! Let Mercy and Goodness constrain me to love thee! Give me that Ingenuity, that generous Temper, that noble Spirit, that thy Goodness may do more with me, than Threatnings, and Hell, and everlasting Torments. Let thy Love and Charity, and constant Munificence, oblige me to run in the way of thy Commandments; Let these be greater Motives with me to do thy Will, than all the Terrors of the burning Lake. O let thy Love be of that Force in my Soul, that I may not be able to resist its Motions, but by the Strength of that, may hope, believe, endure, deny myself, love, and obey thee to the End of my Days, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II.

GREAT Governour and Disposer of the World, who hast promised to them that love thee, so to order all things, that they shall all conspire to their good; I am sensible of the good thou hast intended, and dost intend me, by the various Dispensations, mine Eyes have seen. The various Spiritual and Temporal Blessings that have been conferred upon me, what have they been, but Motives to be enamour'd with the best of Beings. Thou

Thou knowest, if I depart from thee, or love
any thing better than thee, I run away from
mine own Happiness, and go to undo myself;
wherefore so many various Tokens and Expres-
sions of thy Love are sent to me to unite my
Heart to thee, to preserve me in thy Fear,
and to uphold my goings in thy Paths. O
wise, O gracious, O bountiful Master, kind-
er to me than I am, or have been to myself!
Let me find the good thou designest for me in
thy numberless Blessings, even the good of my
Soul, let my Heart grow stronger under thy
Favours, warmer in thy Sun-shine, more
sergent under these Beams, more flaming
with Love under these Enforcives. The ve-
ry Afflictions, thou sendest upon me are inten-
ded for my good. I have found it, I have
seen it, I have known it by Experience, I
have learned that Repentance, Humility,
Submission, and Fear of sinning by Afflictions,
which I should never have learned by Pros-
perity; when I have thought, I had great
wrong done me by the Contempt, Reproach,
Trouble, Misery others have thrown upon me,
thou hast let me see, that this was to make
me reflect on the Affronts, and Indignities,
I have put upon thee my best and greatest
Friend. O let me never mistrust thy Provi-
dence. Whatever befalls me, let me believe I
shall see the goodness of the Lord in the Land
of the living, and let me not be disappointed
of my Hope, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

On

On *Wednesday* we may take a view of our Death, and the Hour of our Departure out of this World; How certain Death is, how frail our Lives, how soon this Frame may be dissolved; how easy a thing dispatches us, how the Approaches of Death have made the stoutest Sinner tremble, how dreadful and terrible it will be to those, who have set their Heart upon the Riches and Pleasures of this World, how wise a thing it is to prepare for it, before the evil Days come, how joyful it will be, if it find us prepared for the Stroke, and fitted for that Life, we must enter into, when we quit this present, how welcome Death is to a Holy Soul, how cheerfully a pious Man can say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace*; how upon our Death there depends Eternity, how foolish is it to slight Grace, and Mercy, till Death forces us to embrace and wish for it, how Death will marr our Beauty, deface our Glory, and lay all our Grandeur in the Dust, how Death is the Birth-day of a sincere Believer, brings him into a new World, a World of Joys, and endless Satisfactions, and is to him an Entrance into Paradise, a Door into the Garden of *Eden*, where no Good shall be absent, and no Evil present.

And

The Best Exercise.

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And even these Thoughts will be more effectual, if the pious Desires which follow, be added.

I.

O Thou, in whose Hand is the Power of Life and Death, who art Immortal, Invisible, Blessed for evermore! Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever the Earth, and the World were made, thou art God, from everlasting to everlasting thou art He. I am a frail, dying Creature; and though I carry an immortal Soul about me, yet the Vessel, in which that glorious Guest abides, will soon grow leaky and decay, and that must turn to Dust, and how soon, I know not; I admire thy Wisdom in concealing the Day and Hour of my Death from me; I am sensible, it's done to hasten my Repentance, to keep me from adding Sin unto Sin, to restrain me from the Vanities of this World, to make me think of a better, and to secure that happy Life which shall be after Death! And O that my Death might be ever before me! How great are the Things that depend upon it! Two great Eternities, whereof one of them, will certainly fall to my Share. O let my Death be my daily Meditation, that I may prevent my everlasting Death! What a miserable Creature should I be, if my Soul should leave this Body, to go into a more dismal Prison, from whence there is no re-
E turning!

turning! O make me wise, O let me understand what Preparation is necessary for that Hour; teach me to undervalue the World, and to mind the Things which are above, that when I come to die, I may die with Joy, and cheerfully resign my Soul into the Hands of my Creator. Let Lust, and Pride, and Envy, and Anger, die in me, before I die, that they may not endanger my Soul after Death. Let me converse with Death more, that I may die to Sin no more, and live more to him that died for me. Let the Thoughts of Death mortify in me whatever is offensive to thy Holiness. In all my Actions let me remember my latter End, that my Death may be my Gain, and my Departure out of the World an Entrance into a better, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II.

O My God, to whom belong the Issues of Life and Death! Naked came I from my Mother's Womb, naked shall I return thither. What is my Life but a Vapour, which appears for a while and then vanishes away! O Lord! thou hast made this Life transitory, dangerous, short, full of Misery, subject to Vanity, and as it were a Span long! and all to make me desire to be dissolv'd and to be with Christ; yet how dreadful is Death to me! How do I tremble at the Thoughts of it! What should make me so deeply enamour'd with this Life? At the best it is a Warfare; within are Tu-

mults,

The Best Exercise.

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mults, without are Fightings; I am in a continual State of War here with Covetousness, with Passion, with Pride, with Ambition, with carnal Lusts, with Allurements of the World, with Suggestions of the Devil; when one Sin is beaten away, another rises; when I think I have mortified one Corruption, another starts up; the Discontents and Vexations, the Troubles and the Disappointments I meet with are innumerable; and can I delight to dwell in such a Valley of Tears, surrounded with so many Snarés, encompassed with so many Dangers? Should not this make me desirous to be gone? O my God, make me willing to leave this World! Take away from me the fear of Death. Why should I fear, when my Great Master hath overcome this King of Terrours? I will follow my Redeemer, I will conform to his Example, I will tread in his Steps; this is my Resolution, this the firm Purpose of my Soul! And why should I doubt of his assisting me! Why should not I be confident, that my Death will be a Passage from Mortality to Immortality, from Corruption to Incorruption, from Trouble and Misery, to Rest and Tranquility? Death is the way to the Kingdom of Heaven. I cannot inherit it, except I die. Do I long for that Kingdom, and shall I be afraid of the Way that leads to it! I must die! O sweet Jesu! let me die contentedly. Let Death be my Choice. Let me embrace it before

this miserable Life, that after Death I may live with thee for ever. Amen.

On *Thursday* we may piously survey the Torments of Hell, how just they are, how great they are, how terrible they are; how the unhappy Prisoners there roar for a Drop of Water to cool their burning Tongues; how they lie tormented in those Flames, wishing in vain for some glorified Spirit to relieve them; for some Comfort from the Mansions of Glory to drop down upon them: What howling, what gnashing of Teeth there is in that outward Darkness; how Men there gnaw their Tongues for Pain, and blaspheme the God of Heaven, because of their Sores and Anguish; how endless those Calamities are; how glad those wretched Captives would be, if there were any Hopes of their Deliverance, after some Millions of Ages: How many, that have made a Jest of these Torments, have felt them in good Earnest; and those that have disputed the Justice of God, in inflicting them, have to their Cost, found that there is no playing with a consuming Fire: How Men, in that *Tophet* wish, when it is too late, that they had bethought, and submitted themselves sometimes to *Christ's* Government, before those evil Days had come upon them; how easy every Precept of the Gospel will then seem to them; how all Pretences of Difficulty, and

and Impossibility will vanish, when they shall lie upon the Rack, and find by sad Experience, that it was easier to deny themselves in their sinful Pleasures, and easier to watch over their Hearts, than to endure such Agonies.

And it is not fit, that even this Meditation should be accompanied with such secret Groans, as these.

I.

O God, whose Judgments are unsearchable, and thy Ways past finding out! Who art just as well as merciful, and hast ordained a Dungeon for Rebels, as well as a Paradise for the Innocent! Horror is ready to overwhelm me, when I reflect on the eternal Miseries of the Damned! When I think on the unquenchable Fire, and the Worm that dies not, how should I tremble at the Sins that lead Men to those Torments? As Eye hath not seen, and Ear hath not heard, and the Heart of Man cannot conceive the Joys of Heaven, so I must judge of these future Miseries too. O dreadful Day, when God shall take vengeance of his Enemies! When not only all the Pain and Anguish that Mankind endures here, shall there be poured out on Sinners, but far greater too. How unable am I to endure here the Aching of a Tooth, the Torments of the Gout, the Misery of the Stone, the Fire of the Fever, the Raging of the Cholick, the exquisite Pain of the Strangury! O then!

What must those Miseries be, which know no Respite, no Interval, no Rest, no Quiet, no Ease, no Abatement! Where Vengeance will come with a Deluge, and not only the Pain of a single Disease will be inflicted, but all Pains together will meet in the miserable Sufferer! Where all Things will combine to make him wretched, and all his former Pleasures turn into Gall and Wormwood! And yet how regardless of these Miseries does Mankind live! How little are they frighted with this Fire! How little are they disturbed with this approaching Woe! O my gracious Lord! suffer me not to fall asleep with the foolish Virgins, while the Day doth last; while I have Time to work, while I am on this side Eternity, let me dread these Terrours, and the Causes of it. Whenever I am tempted to offend thee, O let these Torments check mine inordinate Desires! O let me consider how short the Pleasure is, and how long the Bitterness it ends in! Surely thou wilt let the Disobedient know one Day how odious Sin is in thy Sight, and how dangerous it was to abuse thy Patience! O give my Soul no Rest till I firmly believe all this, and believing it, escape the Wrath to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

II.

Great God, whose Excellency is over Israel, whose Strength is in the Clouds, who art terrible out of thy holy Places, who hast a mighty

mighty Voice, a Voice that will one Day shake the World, and summon all Mankind to come out of their Graves, and to appear before thy Judgment Seat! What Confusion will the wicked and careless World be in, when thou shalt with Indignation send them away into the Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels! Where they must be for ever deprived of thy Favour, and want thy gracious Influences; where their Fancy will be eternally affrighted with hideous and monstrous Shapes, where their Passions will be in a perpetual Uproar, where the Remembrance of their former Mercies will continually sting them, where their Reason will be their Tormentor, their Conscience, their Executioner, and yet unable to make an end of them, where their Souls will be everlastingly torn with Grief and Discontent, where God will be the Object of their Hatred, and their Minds will not be able to entertain one kind Thought of their Judge; where their Souls will be like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, and eternal Darknes and Gloominess make their Estate most uncomfortable, where no Creature pities them, and no Man, no Angel, no Devil affords them any Consolation! O God! can I love myself, and not endeavour to prevent this miserable Condition? O call to me, bid me think of it, convince me of it. Cure my Blindness. Let Hell be the greatest Object of my Fear. Let me not fear Poverty, Contempt, Sicknes,

Sickness, Exile, or the Unkindness of Men, so much, as this horrible Tempest. O let me not grow careless of it, because I see it not, and I have not as yet felt it. Let me therefore dread it, that I may never feel it. Let not the World drown my Thoughts of it. Let not my Lusts put it out of my Mind. Let not the Devil persuade me that I am in no Danger. I am in Danger, O let me see it, and run away. Lord! here cut, burn, torture, and afflict me, so thou wilt but make me happy for ever. O let the King of Heaven hear me when I call, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

On *Friday*, we may cast our Eyes upon the Passion and Death of *Christ*, how he was mock'd, derided, crown'd with Thorns, and crucify'd, to purchase an Eternal Redemption for us: What a wonderful Love it was to suffer all this for Enemies, that they might be reconciled to God, and become his Friends. What a dreadful Spectacle it was, to see infinite Majesty annihilated, infinite Beauty defaced, infinite Happiness tormented, and Eternity dying and dropping into the Grave: What Patience, what Meekness, what Submission, what Gentleness he expressed under all those Injuries, to shew us an Example, and to oblige us to follow his Steps. How heavy the Burthen of our Sins was, that could make the Son of God cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* What a mighty Motive that Love is, to love him

him fervently? How inexcusable that Man makes himself, that believes this Love, and yet will not be persuaded by it, to obey and conform to *Christ's* Will? How mysterious this Love is, that the Sinner should transgress, and the Righteous be punished for him? That the Innocent should suffer for the N- cent, the Judge for the Malefactor, the Master for the Servant, God for Man? What Ingratitude it must be, to trample on the Blood of *Christ*, or put him to open Shame again, or to make light of Salvation, when God hath purchased it at so dear a rate; how by his Death we live, by his Stripes we are heal'd, by his Wounds we are cured, by his Reproaches we are advanced to Glory, and by his being made a Curse for us, we escape the Curse of the Law; How, after so much Charity, we have all the Reason in the World to prize him, and to count all things Dross and Dung in Comparison of him; to delight in him, to love him, to prefer him before the World, and to follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goes.

Who can reflect on all this, and not think himself obliged to address to the Son of God in such pious Thoughts as these.

I.

Great Saviour of the World, who wast wounded for my Transgressions, and bruised for my Sins! Thou art that innocent,
and

and immaculate Lamb, which for Sinners, Enemies, and condemned Creatures, gavest thy Back to the Smiter, and sufferedst thyself to be beaten, crown'd with Thorns, mocked, derided, and inhumanly abus'd! A Love fitter to be admir'd in Silence, than praised with imperfect Expressions! How freely didst thou part with thy Blood to save my Life, and to procure my Safety? Never was Blood spilt upon such an account; or if there were, never was such precious Blood spilt as thine was, Blood which drives away Devils, invites Angels, cleanses Souls, purifies the Tabernacle, washes the whole World, and opens the Gate of Heaven! Who can be so irreligious as not to be pricked at the Heart with the Thoughts of thy Passion? Who can be so arrogant, or proud, as not to be humbled with the Sight? Who so choleric, as not to be melted into Meekness with the Contemplation? Who so luxurious, as not to be tempted to Self-denial with this Spectacle! O let thy Cross have that Effect upon me, that I may crucify my Flesh with all its Lusts and Passions! Let thy Charity to thine Enemies prevail with me, to do good to them that hate me. Let thy Patience under Reproaches, oblige me to be silent under Calumnies. Let thy Love to my Soul wound my Heart, that I may long for thee, breath after thee, as my greatest Comfort, think of nothing so much as of thee, value nothing so much as thee, delight in nothing so much as in thee, for

thou

thou hast done for me beyond Expectation, beyond Imagination, more than Father and Mother ever did, more than my dearest Friends ever did, more than mortal Man can do. O chain my Heart to thine, and let nothing separate me from thy Love, but be thou mine, and let me be thine, and dwell with thee for ever. Amen.

II.

O Jesu! who hast led Captivity captive, spoiled Principalities and Powers, made a Shew of them openly, and triumph'd over them! How powerful was thy Death! How victorious thy Cross! How potent were thy Agonies! How effectual thy Sufferings! Thy Cross is my Conquest. Thy Gibbet is my Triumph. At that, Devils tremble, and they that were not afraid of splendid Palaces, are afraid of the Tree on which thy sacred Body was stretched out. How shall Sin reign any longer in my Body after such Compassion! Shall not I blush after such Mercy to offend that Friend, who died for me? Shall I reward Evil for Good, or dare to act against thee any more, who hast conquered my greatest Enemies for me? They would have swallow'd me up quick, when they were so wrathfully displeas'd at me, but thou cam'st to my Rescue, and would'st not let me perish by their Fury. I can plead no more that Sin, and the Devil, and the World, are not conquerable, for thou hast made them so. They have lost their Force, and Power, and a poor Chri-

Christian can make even Devils flee away. O let the World be for ever crucify'd to me, and me unto the World. Let me not be afraid of Affliction, when my Lord and Master hath endur'd so much for me. I hope to share in the Glories of thy Crown, O let me not be ashamed to bear thy Cross. O blessed Jesu! who art a Guide to the Blind, a Way to the erring Soul, a Staff to the Lame, a Comforter to the Poor, a Harbour to the tossed with Tempests, a Counsellor to the Perplexed, Wisdom to the Foolish, the Glory of Martyrs, the Joy of Angels, the Foundation of the Church, the Physician of the Sick, Meat to the Hungry, Drink to the Thirsty, Clothes to the Naked, be thou all this to me, and let thy Cross supply all my Wants, and in this let me glory and rejoyce Day and Night, that being in some Measure crucify'd with thee here, I may be glorify'd with thee hereafter. Amen.

On Saturday we may lay our Sins before us, when, and where, and how often, and how long, and how wilfully we have rebelled against our best and greatest Friend; What Light we have resisted; What Motions of God's Spirit we have slighted; What Checks of Conscience, and Convictions we have smothered; What Exhortations, and Admonitions, we have baffled; What we have done against the First Table; What against the Second; What against God, and
what

what against our Neighbour: How we have mispent our Time, and trifled away our precious Hours; how vile, how wretched, how odious Sin makes us in the Sight of God; how we are cheated by it; how it flatters us into Destruction; how, like a cunning Merchant, it sells us Trash for Gold, Pebbles for Pearls, and Drops of Gall for Wine and Milk; how bitter it is in its farewell; how it hardens the Heart, sears the Conscience, beguiles us of our great Reward, represents Things to us under false Colours; how it alienates the Mind from God; how averse it makes us from the Ways of God; what Ingratitude it is; how destructive it is; what Hurt it hath done to *Sodom*, to *Jerusalem*, to *Cain*, to *Judas*, to *Dives*, and to innumerable Millions of Men, that would take no warning; How burthensome it will be to the Soul at last, how contrary it is to the Divine Nature, how loathsome to Angels, how odious to a holy Soul; what Tears it hath cost *David*, *Peter*, *Paul*, *Mary Magdalen*, the *Publican*, and others; what Howling, what Terror, what Anguish, what Shrieks it will cause in the burning Lake; how easily these Terrors may be prevented now by a serious Repentance, and how much better it is to abandon, and undervalue the Pleasures and Profits of the World now, than smart for these transitory Delights to all Eternity.

And

And he will soon find, what Impression this Consideration will make upon his Heart, and Life, who forgets not to call upon God, in such Strains as these.

I.

O God, who art Purity and Holiness itself! How despicable, how odious, how contemptible have I made myself in thy Sight by departing from thy holy Commandments deliver'd unto me! How like an Adversary! How like an Enemy of the Cross have I lived! How may I stand amazed at thy Patience, that I am yet on this Side Hell! What ingratitude have I been guilty of to thee the best of Masters, and the kindest Father, who hast been tender of me to a Miracle! How can I reflect upon my Unthankfulness without blushing! O that I might not be able to remember any of my Sins without horror! How have I undervalued thy Wisdom by thinking myself wiser than my God, and by approving that which thy Wisdom hath condemned, as Folly and Brutishness! What Fruit had I then in those things whereof I am now ashamed! What Warnings hast thou given me, not to venture on those dangerous Baits, and yet I have set light by them! I have been loth to believe those, who, poison'd by this Viper, have cry'd out, that they have been cheated and murdered! I would not believe, till I found Death in the Pot; and by woeful Experience saw, that all the fair Promises of Sin, are mere Delusions.

ious. Lord, discover to me my secret Errours,
and the Sins I have been loth to know; con-
vince me of their Odiousness and fearful Conse-
quence! Teach me to remove my Foot far from
them, and let me not come near the Door of
their House. Instead of excusing of them, give
me Grace to confess, and fight against them.
Let not the present Satisfaction tempt me to
run into that Fire, and Anguish they end in.
Though the World lies in Wickedness, yet let
the Familiarity and common Practices of Men
be no Temptation to me. Let me ever look up to
that great and glorious God, who interdicts
it, and count myself happier in thy Favour,
than in all the Sollaces and Flatteries of evil
Men. Anoint me with the Oyl of Gladness,
and let me rejoyce in nothing so much, as in
doing thy Will, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

H.

O Thou, at whose Presence Devils tremble,
and Sinners are afraid! How blind hath
Sin made me! How hath it darkned my Un-
derstanding, and clouded all my Faculties!
How hath it deprived me of spiritual Strength,
and thrust me into the very Jaws of the roar-
ing Lion! What Power have I given to my
spiritual Enemies by offending thee, and how
have I armed those Foes against mine own
Soul! How like an Atheist have I lived, while
I have been careless of thy Omniscience and
Omnipresence! How basely have I prefer-
red

red mine own Will, and the Favour of Men before thy Precepts, and the Light of thy Countenance! O the many idle, foolish, silly, lascivious, ridiculous, censorious Words, Speeches, Discourses and Answers, that I have been guilty of! How little regard have I had to thy Day, thy Name, thy Word, thy Ordinances, to the Duty of Prayer, and to the Ministry! How inattentive in hearing thy Word; how cold in Prayers, how negligent in the Duties of my respective Relations have I been! What Pettishness, Peevishness, Impatience, Touchiness! What Envy, Hatred, Passion, secret Grudges have I harbour'd in my Bosom! what impure, covetous, unclean, disorderly Thoughts and Desires have I suffered to lodge in my Breast! what a Stranger have I been to that Veracity, Meekness, Patience, Humility, Charity, Tenderness, Compassion, Steadiness in Holiness, and Readiness to every good Word, and Work, which thou hast peremptorily commanded! How have I render'd railing for railing, mistrusted thy Providence, allowed myself in Discontentedness, and been a Coward in thy Service! O my God! I renounce all these Swarms of Sin, and beg thy Illumination, Assistance, Power, Grace, and Influence against them! Come, Lord! Come into this Soul of mine, and erect thy Throne in my Breast! When-ever I am tempted for the future, let me say, I am a Christian, I am not mine own, I am bought with a Price, and I cannot yield!

O make

The Best Exercise.

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O make me stand in awe of mine own Conscience, and give me Rivers of Tears to deplore what is past ! O my God ! I desire to walk in the Light, even as thou art in the Light, that I may have Fellowship with thy Saints, and the Blood of Jesus Christ may wash me from all Sins. O quicken me, O strengthen me, O leave me not ; in thee do I trust, let me never be confounded for Christ's Sake ; to whom with thee, and the eternal Spirit, be all Honour and Glory for ever. Amen.

Such Exercises as these keep the Soul awake, and thus rouz'd, it cannot be surpriz'd into a Lethargy. The foolish Virgins, *Matth. 25.* neglected these Meditations, and that made them slumber and sleep : Such daily Meditations keep the Soul in Readiness to obey her great Master's Call, in Case he should summon her to Judgment : These feed and strengthen her as much, as Meat and Drink doth the Body ; and thus supported, it grows strong, and vigorous, and emulates the Felicity of Angels.

Christians, Is your Reason a Talent, or no ? If it be not, then it is no Gift of God ; if no Gift of God, why do you thank him, why do you praise him for it ? If it be, why should not you give God his own again with Usury ? *Matth. 25.* If it be a Talent, must not you give an Account of it in the last Day ? Are you capable of thinking of such Things as these, and will

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not

not your Lord ask you, whether you have made that use of your Reason which he intended it for? Shall you give an Account of your Riches, and Honour, and Time, and Opportunities, and Liberty, and give no Account of your Reason? Will it serve turn, do you think, to say, That you have employ'd it about the World? Is the World a fit Object to engross so noble a Faculty? Shall the meanest Thing, which is no more but Dross and Dung in the Sight of God, employ that Power which is capable of fixing upon the Noblest Being? Would you have the Almighty so unwise, or weak, or improvident, as not to demand of you an Account of his Goods, what you have done with them, whether you have traded with them, whether you have been active in your Master's Business? Your Reason was given you to Trade with it for Heaven; it was given you to help you to steer your Vessel steadily through the boisterous Sea of this World, till you come to the promised *Canaan*, and arrive at the Shore of Eternity, and will you make no other use of it, but think how your Lusts may be gratified, how your carnal Ease may be advanced, and how your outward Man may live in Mirth and Jollity?

You complain of Ignorance; How should you increase in Knowledge, if you will not meditate? How should your Understanding be enlightned, if you will not make use of
this

this Candle? How can you but sit in Dark-
ness, if you refuse this Torch of Heaven? By
this God would teach you, by this he would
instruct you, by this he would communicate
himself to you; but if you will not, whose
Fault is it? Whom can you blame? How in-
excusable do you make yourselves? This
would clarify your Souls, drive away the
Mists and Clouds, that dwell upon your Rea-
son: But if you love Darkness better than
Light, no marvel, if your Deeds be Evil.
It is with your Souls in this Case, as it is
with your Bodies, shut your Eyes, and you
cannot see; so here, keep out such Meditati-
ons as these, and you will not perceive the
Things of God, they'll be Foolishness unto
you, and you cannot perceive them, for they
are Spiritually discern'd.

Never complain of want of Fervency, for
the future, while you are loth to let in
such Meditations into your Minds. Fervency
does not come from nothing, it must have
some Root, some Foundation, some Fuel,
some Action to give it Life and Being; and
Meditation is this Root, and this Foundati-
on: This is it, that must warm you; This is
it, must fill your Souls with hallow'd Flames:
Keep out this, and you keep out the Sun;
shut the Window against these Beams, and
you will freeze, and shake with Cold: It's
This, must make the Ways of God easy to
you; it's This, must make them pleasant,

sweet, and amiable: This gives them Charms, or rather discovers them; This strows the way with Pearls, and shining Stones, which make the Soul enamour'd with it, and thus it flies to Heaven.

The Prayer.

O *Thou, whose Wisdom cannot by searching be found out! who hast made me a rational Creature, and given me Power to think of all thy wondrous Works. What excellent Objects dost thou set before me! Objects to delight, and edify my Soul! O that my Ways were directed to keep thy Statutes! O that my Soul might ever dwell beside those still Waters! O teach me the Art of Meditation. Give me a large and apprehensive Mind. Awaken my slumbring Soul. Encourage it to fix upon adequate Objects. My Soul is a Spirit, O let it delight in Things agreeable to its Nature. Since my Mind must be busy about something, let it be employ'd in Things that make for its everlasting Peace. Oh! how fickle are my Thoughts! How inconstant my Contemplations! How soon, and how easily is my Mind drawn away from Spiritual Things! To thee I flee, O hide me to save me. Let my Treasure be in Heaven, that my Heart may be there also; O spiritualize my Affections, that they may delight to be where thou*

thou art. Let Spiritual Objects become lovely, amiable, and charming in my Eyes. Did I love them, I should think of them: Were they dear and precious to me, how could I forbear contemplating of them! O let their Beauty appear to me. Take away the Veil from my Face, which binds me from seeing him that's altogether Lovely. Encline my Heart to thy Testimonies. Anoint mine Eyes with Eye-salve, that I may see greater Loveliness in Things that are not seen, than in those which are seen. My Understanding is dark, O enlighten it. Clarify it with thy Beams. Let me hate vain Thoughts; but thy Law let me Love. O let me not grudge the Time that I spend in Meditation. Assure me, that this is Balsam to my Soul, and that by these Means the Lines will fall to me in pleasant Places, and I shall have a goodly Heritage. The Righteousness of thy Testimonies is everlasting. O give me Understanding and I shall live. There is Beauty, there is Satisfaction, there is Life in Spiritual Objects. O let me find them sweeter than Honey unto my Taste. Discover those Riches to me, that I may look upon them, and despise the glittering Treasures of Egypt. These are deceitful Things: These allure indeed, but afford no lasting Comfort. O give me a sight of that Wealth, which is not liable to Corruption: I shall find it in the Mysteries of the Gospel. Thou hast

said, the pure in Heart shall see God. O purify my Soul from fleshly Lusts which war against it, that I may see, and discern what thou hast laid up for them that fear thee: And seeing it, may long after an eternal Fruition of the Light of thy Countenance, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IV. *Exercise.*

Every Day to study Humility: An Exercise peremptorily commanded, Matth. 18. 3, 4. Luke 44. 7, 8. James 4. 6. Learn of me, saith the Son of God, for I am meek, and lowly in Heart, Matth. 11. 29. Learn of me! What? Not to raise the Dead, not to cleanse the Lepers, not to cast out Devils, not to give Sight to the Blind, not to make the Deaf to hear, not to cure the Maimed, not to walk on the Water, not to feed five thousand Men with a few Loaves; no, but learn of me Humility, in this Exercise yourselves daily. And indeed greater Humility hath no Man shewn, for being in the Form of God, and thinking it no Robbery to be equal with God, he humbled himself, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and became obedient to the Death of the Cross, saith the Apostle, Phil. 2. 6, 7. This Exercise consists not only in forcing the Body into a submissive Posture, but working the Mind into very low, and humble Thoughts of ourselves, and of our worth, and he is a truly humble

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humble Man, that doth despise himself, and is contented to be counted not only humble, but vile, and wretched too; that refers all the Honour done to himself, unto God, and rejoyces in being despised, and is proud of nothing so much, as being ill spoken of in the Cause of God, and despises Praise and Glory; that compares his Sins with the good Works of Others, and upon that Account looks upon himself, as the chief of Sinners, and worse than others, that affects no Applause in what he doth for God, or for his Neighbour; is contented, his Defects and Infirmities should be known, bears Injuries patiently, is glad of mean Employments to shew his Love to God, doth not care for being known, and looks upon himself as nothing; is circumspect, and modest, delights not in superfluous Talk, laughs but seldom, fixes his Eyes on the Ground, with the Publican, is ashamed to lift them up to Heaven, smites upon his Breast, and cries from a mighty sense of his own Vileness, *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner*: That mistrusts himself, sets no high value on what he doth, contemns the Pomp and Grandeur of the World, admires nothing but God, and is

אם
לכרת
תורה
הדבה
אל
תחזיק
טובה
לעצמך

Messeck.

Aboth. c.

2. Sect. 8.

R. Bechai

in Chobat.

Lebabeth,

c. 7.

Signa hu-

militatis

quinque.

Primum,

Cum quis

in spiritum

suum domi-

nium exer-

cet, quan-

do quis ira

excande-

scit in il-

lum.

Secundum, Cum quis patienter onus suum fert, quando infortunium ipse in opibus accidit. Tertium, Cum quis spernit eum, qui ipsum laudat ob factum bonum, & confitetur peccatum quod refertur eum commisisse. Quartum, Cum quis ad honorem vel magnas divitias promovetur, & in precedenti humilitate & mansuetudine perseverat. Quintum, Cum quis seipsum corripit.

well pleased with being made as the Filth of the World, and as the Off-scouring of all Things: That doth think himself unworthy of the least Crumb he eats, of the least Drop of Drink he drinks; and though the Circumstances he is under, and the Place, Office, Calling, and Condition he is in, bid him use Discretion, in shewing and expressing his Humility, yet in his Mind throws himself at the Feet not only of Equals and Superiours, but of Inferiours too, and could be contented to wash the Feet of the meanest Servant of his Lord and Master *Christ Jesus*; That can hear a Friendly Check with Meekness, can ask Forgiveness, in case he doth unawares offend, before others, and is contented, Men should misconstrue his innocent Words, and Actions, and Gestures, and Behaviour, so God doth but know the pious and holy Designs, he hath in them; That is contented, that those whom he loves, and in whom he trusted, and who have been kind to him, should forsake him, abandon him, and persecute him, and can bear with the Ingratitude of Men, to whom he hath done many good Turns, and can find more Comfort and Satisfaction in the Light of God's Countenance, than other Men do in the Favours, and Presents of the greatest Monarchs; That can modestly decline great Employments, and thinks himself unfit for weighty Provinces; That can be

con-

contented to see his Neighbour honour'd, and himself slighted, and hath Courage to refuse such Honours, as are either too high for him, or unsuitable to his Place and Station; that submits to the Will of God in all Things, and both hopes, and quietly waits for the Salvation of the Lord.

And this is that Humility, the Gospel presses, and whereof the Captain of our Salvation hath given us so illustrious an Example. This is that Virtue which *Cassian* justly calls the *Corner-stone of all Virtues, the Foundation of Religion, the Ladder to intimate Converses with the Almighty, and a Gift beyond that of Miracles*; and this is that Employment which justly deserves our Care and Labour, and Exercise.

When *Austin* the Monk had summoned the *British* Bishops and Clergy to conform to the Church of *Rome*, and to yield Obedience and Submission to that See, the *Britains* consulted with a certain holy Man, to know whether he thought it expedient for them to submit to *Austin* or no. The good old Man told them, That if they found him to be a Man of God, and a true Follower of *Jesus*, they should not dispute their Submission; and the only Character to know that, *said he*, was to see and take notice whether he were a meek and humble Man: If he were, it was a certain Sign that he bore the Yoke of Christ; but if stout and proud, what-

Cassian
Collat. 15.
c. 7.

Bed. lib. 2.
c. 2.

whatever his Pretences might be, he could not be of God. And accordingly when they found the insolent Monk carry it with a high Hand, and scarce vouchsafe to salute them; they rejected his proud Dictates, though it was with the Loss of their Lives.

And though I like not that piece of Humility, whereby Men confess themselves guilty of the Sins of other Men, when they are not, on purpose to win others to Repentance, or to preserve them from Despair, as he in
 * *Ruffinus*, who when his Neighbour had committed Fornication, and thereupon was ready to cast away all Hope, pretended to have committed the same Crime, that he might thereby oblige him to apply himself, together with him, to the Severities of Repentance: Yet, as no Man is to do Evil, that Good may come from it; and as the Devil is not to be gratify'd, that God may be pleas'd; so where a Christian with † *Eugenia*, when moving in the Sphere of Honour and Dignity, can stoop to the humblest and lowest Offices to advance God's Glory, and with King * *Abenner*, think so meanly of himself, that he doth not think himself worthy to name the Name of God, and with the Emperor *Theodosius*, converse with the meanest Men, that have the Image of God upon them; and with the noble *Olympias* in *Palladius*, can lead a Life without the least affectation of Vain-glory, carry a Mind about him,

* *Ruffin.*
 † *it. Pat.*
lib. 3. c. 12.

† *Marty-*
rol. Rom.
28. Decem-
bris, & Me-
nolog. Gra-
corum, 24.
Decemb.
 * *Vincent.*
spec. Histor.
lib. 15.

him, free from Arrogance in the midst of a thousand Acclamations, and not be ashamed of the meanest Habit; honour all Men, succour the Weak, attend the Sick, help the Lame, protect the Aged, relieve the Distressed, be serviceable and charitable to the Poorest and Meanest, shed Tears abundantly from the Consideration of his own Vile-ness; and can with *Euphrasia*, stoop to him that hates him, and pray for the Person that hath injured him, and move his Fellow-Christians to be kind to him; and with the Prophet *David*, takes it kindly when he is reproved, and instead of being angry, thanks the faithful Monitor. Such a one may promise himself the special Presence of the High and Lofty One, who inhabits Eternity, for *with him will I dwell*, saith the Lord, *that is of a contrite and humble Spirit*, Isai. 57. 15.

And though this be look'd upon by the frantick World, as Baseness of Spirit, Cowardice, and a low-bred Mind; yet such is the Nature of Religion, that God's Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, nor are his Ways as our Ways; and *what is highly esteemed among Men, is Abomination in the sight of God*, Luke 16. 15. And whoever will be a Friend of God, must be an Enemy to the World, *James* 4. 4. and be so far from conforming to the World, that he must become a Fool in the Eyes of the World, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18.

Martyrol.
Rom. 14.
Martii.
Menolog.
Gra. 25.
Julii. Fra-
ter quidam
interroga-
vit Senem,
quid est
Humilitas?
Et respon-
dit ei Se-
nex, ut be-
nefacias his
qui tibi
malefaci-
unt. Pe-
lag. in vit.
Pa. c. 63.

I have read of a pious Man (whether it be Parable or History, it matters not) who having a Demoniack brought to him, to expel the Devil out of him, was, after great Importunity, persuaded to command the evil Spirit to depart from God's Creature. The Fiend hearing the unwelcome Voice, cry'd out, *I go*; but pray tell me, Father, who they are, that be the Sheep, and who the Goats, the Gospel speaks of. The humble Man reply'd, Who the Sheep are, God knows; but sure I am, that I am one of the Goats. And when he had said so, the Fiend reply'd, This Humility is the Charm that drives me out. No doubt this is a powerful Weapon to keep off and resist the great Enemy; and he that exercises himself in this Humility, imitates the best Pattern, even God himself, whose Humility, is such, that Men and Angels stand amazed at it; and it could not have entred into our Thoughts, that God could stoop so low, or condescend, as we find he doth, if himself had not been pleased to reveal this Self-humiliation. He hath revealed it, and we have seen the Almighty enter into a Virgin's Womb to be born of her, whom he had made before; We have seen how the Son of God hath loved his Enemies, even with that dearness and tenderness, that he hath laid down his Life for them; We have seen how the Omnipotent Creator,

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courts his Creatures, his rebellious Subjects, to Repentance; We have seen how notwithstanding the frequent Repulses they give him, notwithstanding their frequent Refusals of his stupendious Offers, he renews his Entreaties, repeats his Expostulations, and when the Prodigal Wretch is yet afar off, and approaching his Father's House with Fear and Trembling, runs and hath Compassion, and falls upon his Neck, and kisses him.

This Humility makes us like unto the Angels of God, for as bright and as glorious Ministers as they are, as powerful Princes as they are, for the Kings of the Earth are subject to their Power, yet behold they fly down from above, and minister to those, that shall be Heirs of Salvation, even to the meanest Saint, to the poorest Believer, to a *Paul* in Prison, to a *Daniel* in a Lion's Den.

Hac iter est superis ad magni tecta Tonantis.

This is the Way that leads to Glory: So true is it, what the Religious *Syncletica* said of old, That as a Ship cannot be held together without Nails, so a Christian, and *Christ Jesus*, cannot hold together without Humility. *The Tree of Life*, said the holy *Hyperichius*, grows in Heaven, and *Humility is the Grace, that climbs and touches the Top of it.*

This

Numb. 22.

23-

This leads to the highest Joys, to the richest Content, to the greatest Satisfaction, and he is happier that sees his own Sins, than he that sees an Angel, for an Afs can see a Spirit, but none but a Favourite of Heaven beholds his Sins with Humility, or Self-aborrancy. Antiquity speaks of the Devil appearing to one in the Shape of an Angel of Light, and saying to the Devout Hermit, I am the Angel *Gabriel*, and am sent to thee: O, said the devout Man, Take heed thou dost not mistake thy Message, or the Man to whom thou art sent; I am sure, thou art not sent to me, for I am not worthy of the Sight or Company of Angels; and hereupon the fraudulent Spirit disappeared. In the same Manner he appeared to another, saying, I am *Christ*, and am come down from the Regions of Glory to visit thee: The humble Man answered, I do not desire to see *Christ* in this Life; all my Hope is, I shall see him in the next.

Humility eludes and mocks the Stratagems of the Prince of Darknefs, and how God rewards and crowns it, the Blessed Virgin hath told us, *Luke* 1. 51, 52. *He hath shewed strength with his Arm, he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their Hearts; He hath put down the Mighty from their seats, and hath exalted the humble and meek.*

Indeed, we see how Meadows, and Val-
lies are laden with Fruit, and Corn, and

ena-

enamell'd with Flowers, while the higher Mountains remain barren, and unfruitful. O Christians, did you but know what Treasures lie hid in this Exercise, you would be so far from counting it troublesome, that you would be ambitious of it. In this Exercise consisteth the Mystery of Religion; the richest Influences of Heaven come down upon the Soul, that looks upon herself, as nothing. To her the Almighty reveals himself, and here he is ready to build Tabernacles; the sweetest Communications of Grace are vouchsafed to him, that is acquainted with this Lowliness; into such a Heart the Joys of the Holy Ghost flow with a Spring-tide; and he that would understand the Secrets of the Lord, this is the School where he may learn them; and if he become a great Proficient here, he may promise himself a more than ordinary Inter-course between God and his Soul. The humble Shepherds are honoured with the first News of *Christ's* Nativity, while the lofty Pharisees at *Jerusalem* are kept ignorant of these Glad Tidings; and that which mov'd God to send *Nathan* the Prophet to *David*, to tell him of his singular Love and Compassion to him, was the Voice of that Great humble Man, *I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own Eyes,* 2 Sam. 6. 22.

R. Bechai
Haddajan

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ca. 7. fol.

64. Edit.

Man. 1589

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I'll conclude this *Exercise* with a Passage out of a Learned Jew. The Advantages of Humility, saith he, consist in six Particulars, three whereof do respect this Present and three the next Life. First, It makes a Man contented in all Conditions: For he that is Proud and Arrogant, the whole World, and all that's in it, is not able to satisfy his lofty and rising Thoughts, much less that which God hath appointed him for his Portion; but he that is humble, lives contentedly, and is satisfy'd with what Providence hath allotted him. Secondly, The humble Man bears Adversity patiently, whereas the proud Man's Fear is great, and his Patience inconsiderable, when troubles come upon him. Thirdly, The Man is grateful and acceptable to Men, and Men love him and esteem him: And to this Purpose, I must tell you a Story of a King, that being asked, How he came to be so great? Answered, That he never saw any Man, whom he did not esteem wiser than himself; and those that he look'd upon to be wiser than himself, them he ever thought to fear God, more than himself: And if he met with any, that was manifestly more Foolish than himself, he presently reflected, that this Man would have a less Account to give unto God in the last Day, than himself: If he met with any that were older than himself, he humbly thought, that their Merits must needs be greater than his own; and if those, he met with, were younger than

than himself, he considered, that their Sins must needs be fewer than his own; if he met with any of his Equals, their Heart, thought he, in all likelihood is better than mine; if they were richer than himself, he considered that they did more good in the World than himself; if poorer, that then by reason of their Poverty they must needs have more humble and contrite Hearts, and therefore be better than himself. Fourthly, The humble Man arrives to true and solid Wisdom before other Men, not only because he is desirous to learn, and loves to sit at the Feet of his Teachers, but God also helps him to attain unto more than ordinary Wisdom; whereas the proud and haughty being loth to learn that Wisdom, which crosses Flesh and Blood, remains ignorant of the most solid Wisdom. Fifthly, The humble Man runs more cheerfully in the Ways of God's Testimonies, boggles at nothing that God commands, and expresses Alacrity and Readiness, at the Voice of the greatest and weightiest, as well as at the least and easiest Precept. Sixthly, The humble Man's Devotion is the only acceptable Devotion to God, his Sins are pardoned, his Iniquities are easily forgiven, For an humble and a contrite Heart, O God thou wilt not despise.

The Prayer.

O Thou Lofty and Holy One, who inhabitest Eternity, and dwellest in the high
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and holy Place, with him also that is of an humble Spirit! Whither shall I go, but to thee who hast the Words of eternal Life! How shall I get this humble Spirit, but by thy Power and Influence! Ah! how proud is my Heart! How loth am I to submit to thy Will! How loth to think ill of myself! How loth to bear Injuries! How loth to converse with thy poor Members! How loth to be sensible of my Errours! How loth to acknowledge a Fault! And yet all this while I believethat thou beholdest the Proud afar off, and that nothing is more abominable in thy Sight! How apt am I to admire myself! How apt to harbour high Conceits of my Endowments! How apt to hunt after the Praise of Men! And what is all this but Wind? What is it but Smoak, and Air, and Vanity? How suddenly do these Things grow, and how suddenly do they die again! How sensual, how carnal must that Soul be, that minds such Things! How void of a Sense of greater Beauties! How little affected, how little touched with the Honour that comes from God! How weak in Grace! How feeble in Religion, that hath not learned yet to leap over such Straws! This is my Case, O Lord; I am that weak, that empty Soul, and yet unwilling to confess that I am proud, and vain, and lifted up: Pity me, O my God; make me sensible how far I am from the Kingdom of God, till Humility brings me nearer. Crush
whatever

The Best Exercise.

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whatever proud Thoughts and Desires thou spiest in me. O put me in mind of my Duty, whenever any vain Thoughts arise in my Soul. Pull down in me all Imaginations that exalt themselves against Jesus Christ. O let not my Heart be haughty, nor mine Eyes lofty; neither let me exercise myself in Things too high for me. Give me a Sight of my own Vileness. Let me never be cheated with false Colours. Let thy Greatness over-awe my Soul. Let the Example of my Saviour work upon me. How shall I be his Disciple, and think of myself above what I ought to think. Let God arise, and let all my vain Conceits of mine own Worth be scattered. What am I but a handful of Dust! What am I but a Beggar and thy Pensioner, who live upon thy Charity! O let these Thoughts subdue my Soul. Make me as ambitious of an humble Spirit, and lowly Mind, as others are of the Greatness and Admiration of the World. Humility will make me great and honourable in thy Sight. Let that Honour content me; let that Privilege satisfy my Soul. O let a deep Sense of my Guilt humble me; Then shall I with the penitent Prodigal be welcome in my Father's House, and my Soul shall live, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

V. Exercise.

Every Day to bridle our Tongues, and to set a Watch before the Doors of our Lips, and

to take care that our Speech be always with Grace season'd with Salt, that we may know how to answer every Man; An Exercise enjoyn'd, Col. 4. 6. Ephes. 4. 25, 29. Ephes. 5. 3, 4. Matth. 12. 34, 35, 36. It was a good Observation of one, who travell'd with some Men, that talk'd loosely and inconsiderately, and whom St. *Anthony* the Hermit took for excellent Company; Yes (says he) they are good Men, but the House they live in wants a Door with a Lock and Key, for whoever pleases may go in, and take away what they possess: His Meaning was, That they took no care of their Words, that the Door of their Lips was always open, and that they talk'd any Thing that came into their Minds. *The Tongue, saith St. James, is a little Member, but contains a world of Iniquity, James 4. 5, 6.* So that the Greatness of the Danger enforces the Necessity of this Exercise.

This Exercise consists partly in watching against the Sins, the Tongue is subject to, partly in using the Tongue to such Discourses, as are most proper for a Man, that pretends to be a Follower of *Jesus*. The Sins of the Tongue are without number, yet the most remarkable are these following, 1. Blasphemy. 2. Murmuring. 3. Defending our Sins. 4. Perjury. 5. Lying. 6. Detraction. 7. Accusing others falsely. 8. Much Speaking. 9. Idle Words. 10. Profane Jestings, or abusing of Scripture. 11. Indiscreet Expressions. 12. Railing. 13.

Quar-

Quarrelling. 14. Laughing at, and deriding those that are serious. 15. Evil Counsel. 16. Sowing of Discord and Dissention among Neighbours. 17. Cursing, and customary Swearing. 18. Flattery. 19. Double-tongued Dealings. 20. False Reports. 21. Boasting, and speaking in ones own Praise. 22. Revelation of a Secret. In vain doth he pretend to exercise himself unto Godliness, that watches not against these Sins, or seeing himself in danger of running into them, steps not back, or climbs up with his Thoughts to Heaven, as he that sees a wild Beast coming towards him, climbs up into a Tree, to secure himself.

There is hardly any Precept either more spoken of, or recommended more, either by the Holy Ghost in Scripture, or by holy, wise, and sober Men in their Books, than this Watching over our Tongues, and Words, and Speeches ; for indeed, *By thy Words thou shalt be Justified, and by thy Words thou shalt be Condemn'd*, saith *Christ*, Matth. 12. 37. Before the Power of Godliness was turned into a Form; the Christians that lived then, studied this Point with that Care and Assiduity, and became such Proficients in it, that Men might converse with them, and keep them company a Week together, and not hear one idle Word drop from them, but what was to the use of edifying, and ministered Grace unto the hearers ; and till Men come to believe that their Tongues are not their own, but God's, who

made them and designed them for the noblest Uses, and must therefore be employed as he shall think fit to direct, they are yet far from the Kingdom of God, and *Aliens* from that Common-wealth of Saints, who are to be Heirs of Salvation; and he knows not what Self-denial means, that doth not deny himself in speaking Things which the Holy Ghost hath forbid, and thought improper, undecent, or extravagant; and he that cannot speak, but must offend in one or other of the aforementioned Particulars, had better hold his Tongue, and spend his Time in Silence. It was therefore excellent Advice which St. *Ambrose* gave to his People, *Let's learn to hold our Tongues, that we may be able to speak; why should'st thou run thyself into danger of Condemnation, when by Silence thou mayest be infinitely safer? I have seen Thousands run into Sin by speaking, but few by holding their Peace; most Men love to talk, because they know not how to be quiet. He is the Wise Man that knows when to speak, and when to be silent; if of every idle Word Men shall give an Account in the Day of Judgment, how much more of filthy Communications? Thy Mind is thy Lands and Houses, thy Heart is thy Gold, thy Speech thy Silver. Therefore make a Hedge about thy Lands, and cast up Trenches against thy Thoughts; Arm thy House with diligent Care, that thy unreasonable Passions, like Thieves, do not break in and spoil*

Ambr. de
Offic. lib. I.
6. 2. 5.

spoil it, that no disorderly Motion make an Irruption, and lay it waste, that those that go by, may not pluck off thy Grapes. Watch over thy inward Man, do not neglect it as a Thing contemptible; tie up thy Speech, cut off its luxuriant Branches; let it not play the wanton, lest it drag thee into Sin; restrain it, keep it within its Banks, Water soon gathers Mud; Bind up thy Senses, let them not be loose or gadding; make a Door to thy Lips, to shut it when there is Occasion, and to open it when there is Necessity. Bring thy Tongue under the Yoke, and let it be subject to thy Reason. Keep the Bridle in thine own Hands; weigh thy Words in a Balance, that thy Sense may be ponderous, thy Speech solid, and thy Words move within their Bounds.

But watching against the Sins of the Tongue, is but one half of this Exercise, speaking of God and heavenly and spiritual Things is another, as we may see, *Col. 3. 16.* an Exercise commanded already in the Days of Moses, *Deut. 6. 5, 6, 7.* and duly observed by Men, who took care of their Salvation, long before the Gospel was proclaim'd in the World, which makes the Prophet take Notice, *Then they who fear'd the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearken'd and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name, and*

they shall be mine saith the Lord of Hosts, in that Day when I make up my Jewels, and I will spare them as a Man spareth his own Son that serves him, Mal. 3. 16, 17.

1 Cor. 12.
31.

*Ubi sedent
duo, qui
Legem tra-
stant, cum
illis est
Shekinah.*

*Rabbini in
Pirke Ab-
both.*

*Non sunt
in Conven-*

tu tres, ni-

*si Deus sit
quartus*

five multi

five pauci

sint, ipse

cum eis est

Maho. Al-

chr. Surat.

58.

Cur Deus

vocatur.

מקום

quia ubi

congregati

sunt fusti,

invenitur

cum istis

Midrash.

Tillim.

Indeed spiritual and heavenly Things are the best Things; so we say, so we believe; we confess so much in our Prayers, we declare so much, when we are ask'd our Opinion about them, when we are Sick, when any Afflictions befalls us, when we are a dying. If meaner Things, or Trifles are thought worth discoursing of, why should not the greatest, most excellent, and noblest, be worth talking of? especially when we converse with Persons that profess the same Faith with us. There is hardly any Man, that makes a shew of Religion, or frequents the publick Ordinances of God, but will grant and confess, That the Concerns of God, and of our Souls, do infinitely exceed all Earthly Objects in Worth, Value and Dignity; but then not to speak of them is an Omission, which contradicts that Belief, and makes that Faith all Shadow, and Imagery. He that believes that these are the best Things, and yet cares not for discoursing of them to his Neighbour, gives himself the Lye, and silently confesses, that whatever his Pretence may be, they are the meanest, lowest, and most inconsiderable Things, for he doth not think them worth opening his Lips about them. And

as these are the best, so they are the most necessary Things, *Luke 10. 42.* Can there be any Thing more needful, than God's Favour? any thing more necessary, than the Love of God? any thing of greater Importance than the true way to inherit Eternal Life? If we deny this, we deny our Being, and Dependance upon God, and disclaim our Relation to him, as his Creatures, as his Servants, as his Children, put ourselves into the number of his Enemies, make ourselves Objects of his Anger, renounce our Allegiance to him, and deprive ourselves of all those Comforts, which arise from a Sense of his Paternal Protection and Providence; and if they be the most necessary Things, certainly they deserve, certainly they challenge our frequent discoursing of them; for we therefore talk of our worldly Affairs, because we look upon them as necessary; and by making this our Rule, we confess the absolute Necessity of speaking of Things that are infinitely more necessary.

We can be happy without Riches, happy without Honour and Applause from Men, happy without a Palace, happy without a Vineyard, happy without a full Barn, but we cannot be happy without Grace, without Godliness, or without a Sense of the Divine Goodness. To this End they are represented in Scripture by Fire and Water, and Cloathing, things necessary for Humane Life.

Life. By such Names and Epithetes Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the Graces of the Holy Ghost, are expressed, to assure us not only of the Necessity of them in general, but to explain the Manner of the Necessity, that they are as necessary, as Fire, and Water, and Cloaths to cover our Nakedness; and after all, to direct us, when we look upon these outward Conveniencies, to take Occasion to talk of these Spiritual Things, which are represented by them. Nay, considering the infinite Advantages they yield us, Spiritual Things are most necessary, more necessary than Meat, and Drink, and Cloathing, or Provision; and because more necessary than these, it must unavoidably follow, that it is more necessary when we meet, to talk together of the Things that belong to our Peace, than of what we shall drink, or of wherewithal we shall be cloathed; and so much Christ intimates in that saying, *Matth. 6. 33. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and its Righteousness.*

And as these Heavenly Objects are the most necessary Things, so they are Matters of the greatest Consequence; an everlasting Estate depends upon them; where a Man embraces them, as his greatest Treasure, an Eternity of Joy attends him; where he flights, or despises them, an Eternity of Torments follows him at his Heels, and shall not Things of that Consequence merit our

Christ, or Conferences about them? The Man that fears his House may be on fire, talks of nothing so much as his Fears, and the Damage he shall suffer by the Conflagration. The Man that hopes to inherit such an Estate, or such a curious Seat, is wonderfully pleased with Discourses of the Situation, of the Largeness, fairness, fruitfulness, and pleasantness of the Place; and shall he that hath no other Reason to fear, that his Portion shall so long be howling and gnashing of Teeth, in an eternal Prison, or hath reasonable Hopes that an everlasting Kingdom of Joy, and Bliss, and Glory, shall fall to his share, before a few Days or Years come to an End; shall, or can he sit still under these Hopes or Fears, and not express his Sense of it to his Neighbour when he meets him?

What are our Tongues given us for, but for Discourses and Conferences of this Nature? If the Righteous Man is the only Wise Man, as *Solomon* assures us, and prosecutes the true End of his Creation, and consequently is a Pattern, or Original for others to write Copies by, then from the Employment he puts his Tongue to, we may conclude, what it is created for; and of this Employment, the inspired King gives us an Account, *Psalms* 37. 30. *For the Mouth of the Righteous, saith he, speaketh Wisdom, and his Tongue talks of Judgment.* To be able to discourse of secular Affairs, and Businesses

nesses of our Callings, and Professions in the World, is indeed one End, why that Member was added to the rest, but it is one of the lower and subordinate Ends: The chief and principal End, is this we speak of; for whatever Things God makes any Creature capable of, the noblest Acts of that Creature are the chief End for which it was vouchsafed a Being; and from hence the Consequence is very easy, that discoursing of Spiritual Things must needs be the chief End, for these are the noblest Acts our Tongues are capable of; such Discourses being the Trumpets, as it were, whereby we praise and magnify our Maker, and shew forth the Glory of our great Redeemer, and proclaim his Goodness to the Children of Men: We know that God made all Things for his Glory, indeed without it he could not have acted like himself, or like an Infinite Spirit of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness; and then certainly our Tongues are chiefly designed for such Conferences; and he that neglects this Exercise, frustrates God's Designs, and reverses as much as in him lies, the very End of his Creation, *For ye are a chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People, that ye should shew forth the Praises of him, who hath called you out of Darkness into his marvellous Light,* 1 Pet. 2. 9.

How can we want Matter of Discourse, when we hear so many Sermons, when we have Liberty to peruse the Holy Scriptures, and read such variety of good Books, which are so many Comments upon the Bible? Not a Precept in the Gospel, that is given to regulate our Thoughts, or Words, or Actions, or Passions; not a Command, not a Direction left us by our Master, but is a fit Subject for such Holy Conferences. Our Experience will administer Matter in these Cases; What Experience we have had of God's Goodness; What Experience of the fulfilling of such a Promise; What Experience in Prayer; What Experience in Mortification; What we have found in such a Duty; What Effect our earnest striving, and wrestling with Almighty God, hath had; What Influence such a Fast, or Abstinence hath had upon us; What Content we have found under such Severities; What Assistances of God's Spirit we have found in our fighting against Temptations; What Comfort in such Afflictions; what hath kept us from sinking; How God hath supported us in such a Calamity, and hath been our Refuge, and a present help in the Time of Trouble; when the Earth hath been moved, and when the Hills have been ready to be cast into the midst of the Sea.

Have not we Defects and Infirmities enough to Discourse of? Do we find no Remora's

mora's, no Impediments, that let us in our Course to Heaven? Do not we fall short of that Christian Perfection, the *Holy Ghost* urges? And is not the Zeal, and Fervency for God's Glory, we find in ourselves very inconsiderable? Are we not very apt to sink in to Hypocrisy, and to be backward to the greater and weightier Matters of the Law? Do not we embrace Excuses suggested by the Devil, whereby we leave the most excellent Duties undone? Do not we find Imperfections and Infirmities in our holy Performances? Do we find no coldness, no deadness, no indisposedness in God's Service? If we do, how can we want Matter of Discourse?

How many good Thoughts come into our Minds, when we wake first in the Morning, when we lie down at Night, when we are walking, when we are sitting down, when we light into ill Company, when we meet with good Society, when we meet with signal Providences and Deliverances, when we receive unexpected Blessings from Heaven, when Men wrong us or do us an Injury? What edifying Expressions and Discourses may we build upon these Thoughts and Contemplations, when we visit one another?

How many excellent Examples of Holy Men and Women may we pitch upon in our Discourses? Can there be more edifying Discourse,

course, than to relate and represent to one another the Holy Actions of Saints, either departed, or living yet? How humble *St. Paul* was, how courageous *St. Peter*, how fervent *David*, how meek *Moses*, how patient *Job*? How such a one scorned to be called the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, and fix'd his Eyes upon the great Recompence of Reward? Another took pleasure in being reviled; another thanked God in the midst of Torments; another pray'd for those that tormented him; another chose Poverty and Contempt, and the Loss of all Things, that he might win *Christ*. Excellent Matter of Holy Discourse, and such as in all probability *St. James* did aim, and point at, *James* 5. 10. *Take, my Brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken in the Name of the Lord, for an Example of suffering, Affliction, and of Patience.*

And if this will not do, there are so many Motives, and encouraging Arguments to Goodness, both we and others do make use of, that we may as soon want Light at Noon, as Matter of Pious and Religious Conference when we converse with our Fellow-Christians: What moves us to be Meek? What prevails with us to be Patient? What makes us contented in all Conditions? What composes our Souls in fiery Tryals? What puts us upon Self-denial? What Incentives to the Love of God do we make

make choice of? How came we by that feeble and feeble Frame of Spirit we are in? How came we to conquer such a Lust? What did we do to vanquish such a Corruption? How did we compass that Facility, and Willingness to conform to God, which seems to be in us? How came *Christ's* Yoke to be easy to us, and his Burthen light? How came we to be rid of such a Sin? How came we to extricate ourselves from such Snares, and Deceits of the Devil? The various Ways and Methods, whereby we do arrive to such Perfections as these, are so many Doors of Utterance, and will serve to make us open our Mouths boldly; and he that doth so doth without all Controversy, exercise himself unto Godliness: And to illustrate this Exercise by some Examples, it will not be impertinent to set down here the Discourse of the Twelve *Hermits* in *Paschasius*, that meeting once a Week, gave one another an Account of their Spiritual Progress, and thriving in Grace, and one of their Conferences was this:

Paschas.
c. 44.

The *First* said, Every Day I watch against evil Thoughts, and Lusts, as I do against Serpents and Scorpions; and as soon as I find them rising in my Heart, I threaten them, and am heartily angry with them, and chide them for their Insolence and Sauciness, and ask them, How they dare to be

to bold, as to prophane a Temple of the
Holy Ghost.

The *Second* said, I look upon myself every Day as a Stranger, and Pilgrim, that must suffer many Inconveniencies, Troubles, and Injuries, till I come to my Journey's end; and I ever look upon the Morrow, as the Day, wherein I shall be deliver'd from the Burthen of the Flesh, and from all Possibility of Sinning, and so bear up, under all the Crosses, that befall me.

The *Third* said, Every Day very early in the Morning I get up, and go to my God, and throwing myself down upon my Face, adore him, and intercede with him for the whole World; and this done, I go and deny my Body that Ease and Satisfaction, which Flesh and Blood doth crave, on purpose to crucify the World to myself, and myself unto the World.

The *Fourth* said, Every Day I take a Turn, and walk upon the Mount of *Olives*, and there behold my dear Redeemer blessing, and do so reflect on his Passion, and the Agonies he endured for my Sin, till the Spectacle melts me into Tears, and forces me into very strong Resolutions to imitate him, whom my Soul doth love.

The *Fifth* said, Every Day with the Eyes of my Understanding, I behold the Angels of God (as *Jacob* once did in a Dream) ascending and descending for the Salvation of Mens Souls; and this Love, and Care, and Tenderness so works upon me, that I do both wish that all Mankind may be saved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and do give more Diligence to make my Calling and Election sure.

The *Sixth* said, Every Day I make it my Business to meditate on that saying of *Christ*, *Come to me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you, take my Yoke upon you*; and I fancy I hear this Voice behind me, *O Christians, if you mean to be my Brethren, suffer with me, that ye may reign with me; Die with me, that ye may Live with me; Conquer with me, that ye may sit with me in my Throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.*

The *Seventh* said, Every Day I sit in Council with three grave Senators, Faith, Hope and Charity; and the Effect of this Consultation is, My Faith becomes more firm, my Hope more lively, my Charity more spreading, and more fervent, and I dare not willingly offend any Man, but think myself obliged to suffer long, and to be kind, not

to behave myself unseemly, not to seek my own, not to be easily provoked, and to think no Evil.

The *Eighth* said, Every Day I do expect the Devil, and look for his Assaults and Stratagems; and when I see him coming in my Mind, I run to God, and hide myself under the shadow of his Wings, and beg hard that his fiery Darts may not hurt me:

The *Ninth* said, Every Day with my Thoughts I ascend into Heaven, and there listen to the *Hallelujahs*, and harmonious Voices of the Blessed Angels, and refresh my Mind, and all that is within me, with those melodious Songs, and when I do so, I die to the World, trample upon all Sublunary Objects, and despise those Things which Sensual Men admire, 'as Dirt and Dung.

The *Tenth* said, Every Day I do set God before me, and look upon him as present, and standing on my right Hand, and I strive to have this Thought continually in my Mind, whence it comes to pass, that I speak, and do nothing but with great Consideration and Deliberation.

The *Eleventh* said, Every Day I call the Graces and Gifts of God's Spirit about me;

and when I am going out, I cry, *Where are you all? Come about me my faithful Servants*; and these are the Retinue I go attended withal; in this State and Pomp I set forth; with this Guard about me I walk, and no Devil dares approach to hurt me.

The *Twelfth* said, Where-ever I go, I see my Sins go before me; and whether I look on my right or left Hand, they still appear to me in very dreadful Shapes, and that makes me every Day take a View of Hell, and there I behold with Amazement the many Millions of poor tormented Creatures, that howl, and shriek, and lament, that they have neglected so great Salvation, and this doleful Cry makes me watch against every Weight, and every Sin, which does so easily beset me.

And now, Brethren, *If there be any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fullfil ye my Joy*; and let not this Exercise seem grievous to you. Plead not that it is out of Fashion; if it be so, do you make it Modish. You know who it is that beseeches you by the Mercies of God, *not to conform yourselves to the World*: If it be out of Fashion to be Saved, will you therefore resolve to be Damn'd? Bear up against the Stream; be not ashamed of Christ, and

Rom. 12.
2.

and of his Gospel: You dare not plead this Excuse in the last Day, why should you alledge it now? Here is no Rhetorick required, no Eloquence, no florid Learning; O that you were but more sensible of your Spiritual Wants! O that your Hearts were but more inflamed with the Love of God! O that you did but observe God's Dealings with your Souls more, and would take more notice of God's Providences, and the Operations of his Hands! You would not then want Language to express yourselves to your Children, Servants, Friends, Neighbours and Acquaintance, but the Sense within would force you to say with *David, Come, and I will tell you what the Lord hath done for my Soul*, Psal. 66. 19. Do not think Heaven so cheap a Thing as your careless Neighbours do; either Christ and Heaven, and our future Glory, are worth talking of, or nothing can be worth it. Dare to prefer Heaven before the World; and in your Words, as well as Actions, manifest the Sincerity of your Resolution; you cannot pretend Impossibility, you have a Tongue, you have Reason, you hear the Ministers of the Gospel, you see God's Providences, you know Heaven and Hell are before you, you read many excellent Lessons, what should hinder you from speaking of these weighty Things? It's but bending and applying your Tongues to such Subjects, and they'll yield as easily,

as they do when you bend them to frivolous, vain, and idle Talk, to gossiping, or complementing, or prating of other Mens Matters. You will rest the sweeter at Night, when you have been talking of good Things in the Day-time: You'll go with greater comfort to Bed, your Sleep and Repose will be more pleasing and satisfactory, when you have exercised your Tongues in Matters of this Nature: When you talk of such heavenly and spiritual Things, you are not exposed to so many Temptations, as otherwise you are, when in Company with others; you may sin in talking of your Neighbours, you may sin in speaking of the Actions of Kings and Princes, you may sin in telling Things and Passages for true, which have no other Foundation, but an uncertain Report, you may sin in foolish Jestings, and jeering one another; but in discoursing of heavenly Things, you are safe, you are in God's Way, God walks with you, bears you Company, and the Enemy of your Souls will despair of prevailing with you; you shun the Occasions of Evil, and you prepare yourselves to quench the fiery Darts of the Devil: Hereby you may do good to Others, comfort your Neighbours, support your Fellow-Christians; and in such Conferences a Word may drop from you, as may keep those, you discourse with, from Despair, and which may be an Encouragement to them, as long as they live. It

It was bravely done of that Young Man Hieron. Vir. Pauli c. 3. under *Decius* his Persecution, who being by Force tied upon a Down-bed in a Room made for Pride and Luxury, and sollicitod to Uncleanness by a Harlot, sent to him by the Governour, on purpose to provoke him to Sin, bit his Tongue to pieces, that the Smart and Pain might drown all Sense of Voluptuousness, and so spit it in the Harlot's Face: But here we require no such Severity; but all that is expected from you in this Exercise, is to keep your Tongues from Evil, and your Lips from speaking Guile; to speak of the Glorious Honour of God's Majesty, and of his wondrous Works; to utter abundantly the Memory of his great Goodness, and to declare his Righteousness. The very Heathen have seen the Necessity of this Exercise, therefore they shall be your Judges in the last Day; and I know not how to express their Sence of this Duty better than by setting down the Words of the Sober *Epictetus*: Prescribe thyself a Rule, Epictet. Enchirid. c. 40, 41, 42. Γὰρ οὐ πᾶς καὶ ἐκπύει τὸ πῶν ἐν φωνῇ. which thou mayst observe, when thou art either by thyself, or in Company with Others; either be silent, or let the Things thou speakest of be necessary and profitable. When thou speakest, talk not of light and trivial Things, as Wrestling, and Horses, or Fencers, or Swords, or Meat, or Drink, neither spend thy Time in praising or dispraising Men; but let thy Discourse be of something noble, de-

gent, grace and serious: But if this cannot be, hold thy Peace. But Examples of Men of our own Religion, may be more prevailing. Thus did the Primitive Saints; and when they visited one another, their Care was, to put one another in mind of the Words and Actions of their Great Redeemer, what he did, and what he promised, and what he suffered; how kind he was to this Blind Man, how favourable to that Leper, how loving to the Lame; how compassionate to the Blind, how gracious to his Enemies, how free and communicative to his Friends; what Pity he express'd to sinful Men, how meek he was before his Accusers, how patient before his Tormentors; how he ran to kiss the Penitent, how he wept over the obstinate Jews, and how he long'd for Mens Salvation. These were their Discourses, and they would hardly give themselves liberty to Talk of their Worldly Affairs, except Necessity forced them; for they believ'd, that by their Charter, they were to have their Conversation in Heaven; and this they thought imported talking much of their Heavenly Country, and of the Joys and Hallelujahs of that Kingdom. It was the Custom of some Heathen Priests of Old, in the Service of their Gods, to wash, or dip their Tongues in Honey; an excellent Emblem to teach us, how our Tongues must be purified, and sanctified, and seasoned with that Word,

which

Porphyre.
de Antro.
Nympha.

which is sweeter than the Honey, and the Honey-comb, *Psal. 19. 10.* And indeed when our Words are sweet and there is Milk and Honey under our Tongues, when we exhort and admonish one another daily, taking heed lest we be harden'd through the deceitfulness of Sin, *Heb. 3. 13.*

The Prayer.

O God, by whom I am fearfully and wonderfully made, who hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine Hand upon me, such Knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it! How have I abused that Tongue thou hast given me to shew forth thy praise! How long have I employ'd it about things which do not profit! I am ashamed of it. O teach me to blush! O let me see how I have perverted thy Gifts, and mis-improved my Talents! O let me value thy Mercies better, and give me thy Grace to remember that I am not mine own. Assure me that I am bought with a Price, to shew forth the Glory of him that dy'd for me. And can I shew forth thy Glory, if my Tongue be not cautious of offending thee? Can it look like glorifying thee, if that Member, which of all the Organs of this mortal Frame, is most fitted for thy Glory, fails in its Duty? The voluntility, quickness, nimbleness, readiness, thou hast planted here, were all intended to trumpet forth thy glorious Attributes. O my God! I will

not

not hide thy Righteousness within my Heart,
 will declare thy Faithfulness, and thy Salva-
 tion. I will not conceal thy Loving-kindness
 and thy Truth from the great Congregation.
 Let me speak of thee with Reverence and godly
 Fear. Give me Discretion to know how, and
 when, and what to speak. Lord give me Motives
 and Arguments to speak as I ought to do. Let
 my Speech be always with Grace season'd with
 Salt, that I may know how to answer every
 Man. Let no corrupt Communication proceed
 out of my Mouth, but that which is good
 to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace
 unto the Hearers. Set a Watch, O Lord, before
 my Mouth, and keep the Door of my Lips. Let
 me keep my Mouth, as it were with a Bri-
 dle, and teach me to punish myself for my great
 Neglect with gracious and savoury Discourses.
 Let me delight to speak of thee, and make me
 afraid of every idle Word. Lord, rule my
 Tongue, and let even that Member be dedica-
 ted to thy service. In all my Speeches and An-
 swers let me study Veracity, Sobriety, and
 Modesty. Open thou my Lips, O Lord, and let
 my Tongue be filled with thy Praise all the
 Day long, and in the Night-season let me not
 be silent. Fill me with a profound sence of the
 Great Day of Account, when my Words will
 be examined as well as my Actions. Season
 my Tongue with Conscientiousness, and let me
 not be rash with my Lips. Let my Heart
 smite me, when I am going to speak Things
 which

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which are not after thy Law. Let thy Statutes
be my Songs in the House of my Pilgrimage, and
let the Law of thy Mouth be better unto me
than thousands of Gold and Silver. Amen.

VI. Exercise.

Every Day to watch against those Sins,
which, in the Eye of the World, are small and
inconsiderable; an Exercise commanded, Matt.
19. 1 Cor. 5. 6. Jude, verse 23. Indeed
Christ's whole Sermon upon the Mount is
chiefly bent against those Sins, which pur-
blind Mortals are apt to miscall little, and
trivial. The Pharisees were such ill Divines,
that they not only believed, but taught the
People too, that in the Ten Commandments
nothing was forbid, but only the gross Er-
rors of Mens Lives and Conversations: By
Example, in the Sixth Commandment they
thought God required nothing, but ab-
staining from down-right Murther, and ac-
cordingly they made nothing of Envy, or
Malice, or Grudges, or secret Heart-bur-
nings; nothing of Words spoke in Anger,
nothing of contumelious Speeches, nothing
of giving Men ill Names, or ill Language,
nothing of Expressions, whereby they de-
rogated from their Neighbour's Credit, and
wounded his Reputation; which willful and
notorious Mistakes, Christ rectifies in that
Sermon, and bids them look for God's eter-
nal Wrath for these Offences, as well as for
the

the greater Enormities. So in the Seventh Commandment, they flatter'd themselves that they did rarely well obey the great Law-giver; when they kept themselves from being polluted with their Neighbours Wives, and from the Act of Adultery; but the Son of God shews them their monstrous Errors, and proves to them that not only that detestable Act is prohibited in that Law, but all those Acts and Occasions that lead to it, as wanton Glances, lascivious Thoughts, obscene Expressions, running to Places where Temptations grow, bad Intentions, lustful Touches, evil Desires; and these, he assures them, lead to Hell, as well as the grosser Villanies. In the same manner they restrain'd the Third Commandment to Perjury only in a publick Cause, and so thought light of customary Oaths; these were but Matters of Laughter, and the People by their Permission and Approbation, in their common Speeches and Communications, swore by Heaven and by Earth, by their Heads, and by *Jerusalem*; and he that did so, did not lose the Reputation of a sober Man: The Lord Jesus protests against this Abuse too, and lets them see, that He, who forbid Perjury, did forbid these common and customary Oaths too, and was resolved to revenge and punish the Offenders for so doing; and did not so much as permit strong Asseverations in common Discourse, and

nd ordinary Matters, but allow'd only bare Affirmations and Negations.

Loving those that loved them, and doing good to them, that did 'good to them, they thought, was all that God required in that Royal Law, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*. Hating their Enemies, or doing them all the Mischief they could, they look'd upon only as a venial Extravagance of Passion. So they did but perform the Task and Duty of Prayer, they did not think any Sin could be committed in the Manner of the Performance; and therefore wandring Thoughts, and Affectation of Vain-glory, or laying the stress upon the length of Prayer, they thought were no Sins at all; or if Sins, not worth regarding or confessing. And by the same Rule they walk'd in their Alms and Fasting, thinking the Letter of the Law required no more, than the outward Observance of the Duty. As for a suitable frame of Heart, they did not look upon the want of it as damnable, or worth their Care to get it supply'd from Heaven. Thus these Men lessen'd and extenuated their Offences; and having once brought them into the Number of little Sins, they excluded them from their Care, and would not suffer their Consciences to be troubled for them; and though they had very severe Exercises, and disciplined their Bodies to a Miracle, yet they made watch-
ing

ing against little Sins no Part of their Exercise; and this Neglect draws that dreadful Protestation from the Son of God. *Matth. 5. 20. I say unto you; That except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God.*

What these little Sins are, and how they may be known, is a Question that any Man of common Sense may soon satisfy, and resolve himself in, that will either compare his Actions with the Precepts of the Gospel, or attend and observe his own Neglects, or the Practices of such of his Neighbours, that in the Eye of the World pass for sober Men, and yet are no thorough-pac'd Christians. How few are there that make Conscience of curbing their Passions, of being concern'd for the Sins of others, of giving Alms according to their Ability, of speaking Truth, when they are in Danger of losing something by the Truth, of obeying God more than Men, of being more careful to please the Creator than the Creature, of Attention in a Sermon, of fixing their Thoughts and Affections upon God in Prayer, of ruminating upon what they hear, of doing Good to them that hate them? &c. Neglects of such Duties pass for Peccadillo's, and cunning Frauds, Dissimulations, officious Lyes, false Warrantings, secret Over-reachings, mincings of Oaths, telling of unchast Passages,

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Exercises, churlish Behaviour, unkindness to Enemies, revenge of Injuries, hatred of a Brother, Adulation, Flattery, laughing at good Counsel, slighting of Fraternal Correction, wanton Songs, Scoffings at Ministers, rash censuring and judging, and contempt of others, or Pride in Cloaths, Patching or painting, talking extravagantly over a Cup of Wine, sleeping at Church, and carelessness in Devotion, are Sins which few People take notice of, looking upon them as offences of the smaller size, and as Things easily pardoned, as they think, by him who delights not in the Death of a Sinner.

But, Sirs, as little as these and other Sins may seem in your Eyes, we have a Commision from the Almighty, to tell you, that you cannot be Christians, except you exercise your watchfulness against all those Sins, which the World is pleased to call by other Names, than the holy one of *Israel* is pleased to put upon them. A Christian hath vow'd to strive against all Sin, whether great or small. This Oath of God is upon you, and in your Baptism so much you promised, and so much you have since confirmed, by approving that your solemn Initiation, or Introduction into the visible Church of *Christ*. Will ye be false to your Promise? Will you break your Vow? Will ye abjure, what then you gave your Consent

sent to? Deceive not yourselves, these Sins are not little ones, you only call them so that you may the more freely commit them, and that your Hearts may not smite you for them; And yet there is a secret Fear in you, that they may provoke the Almighty to Anger, and that you may not be discompos'd with the Thoughts of God's Indignation, you look upon them as Trifles. Such Sins formerly were no little Sins, when Men were better Christians than now they are; it's only the great Debauchery, and Viciousness of the Age we live in, that makes them so: But shall this Age prescribe Rules to God to govern himself by? Shall the Wickedness of the Times oblige God to condescend to Mens Impiety, and in Complaisance to their Folly, cause him to make no more of their Sins, than they are pleased to do? Shall Men wilfully blind, tell the Almighty what Colour their Sins are of, or how he must interpret them, that searches the Heart, and the Reins?

Can any Sin be little that is committed against an Infinite Majesty? Can any Affront be small that's levell'd against him, whose Brightness dazles the Eyes of Angels? If it were not against a Law of God, it could not be sin; but is not the same Authority to be seen in the least Precept, as well as the greatest? Doth one God give the greater, and another the lesser Injunctions? And

if the same God be slighted in the greater and lesser Laws, will not the same God find a Time to lash the Boldness of the Offender?

How is it possible you can love God, while you do not exercise yourselves in rooting out these lesser Sins? Can you love God and fight against him? Can you be enamour'd with him, and affront his Holiness? Can you tell us a way, how to reconcile God's Purity with your Uncleaness? You cannot but be sensible that these (you call) lesser Sins offend him, and is this your Love to him, to disobey him? Is this your Affection to him, to do what you know will cross his Will and Pleasure? Is this your Respect to him, to disoblige him in Things he intends for your eternal Welfare? Let the Sin be never so small, you do allow yourselves in, while you willingly indulge yourselves in it, it loses the Name of an Infirmary, and passes for Enmity in the Sight of Heaven; and it's impossible that Love to God, and willful Sins should ever consist together. Do you believe that Servant loves you, to whom you have spoken often to do some small Thing about you, and yet with all your Entreaties and Caresses you cannot oblige him to gratify you in that particular? Would you have God believe you, that you love him, when you are loth to do whatsoever he commands you?

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If Love to God does not make you ready unto every good Work, it is not Love, but Hypocrisy; Love will make Things easy, and did you love God with Sincerity, you would not leave a Circumstance undone, if you knew that he had enjoyed it.

Why should you cheat yourselves? Why should you delude yourselves in a Thing so palpable? Whatever you may imagine, these lesser Sins are but Baits to lead you on to greater. The *Persians* at this Day are great Takers of *Opium*; at first they take no more than the Quantity of a Pin's-head, increasing their Dose by Degrees, till they come to take the Quantity of half a Nutmeg; when they are come to that pitch, they dare not give over, for fear of endangering their Lives: A true Emblem of those Sins, the World calls little and inconsiderable. The lesser Doses, like small Wedges, widen the Cleft, and are Preparatives for greater, and invite Men to take a larger Proportion, till at last it becomes dangerous to cashier and part with them; and thus by little and little Men sink into the Gulf.

Tavern.
Perf. Trav.
l. 5. c. 17.

2. Kings 8.
13.

As much as *Hazael* abhorr'd the Villanies *Elisha* spoke of, the little Sins he then lived in, brought him at last to that monstrous Iniquity, he at first trembled at. *Judas* lookt upon Covetousness as an inconsiderable Sin, and made no great matter of it, but it brought

brought him at last to Treason. Strange that you should not see the Danger! Nay, you cannot promise yourselves God's preventing, or restraining Grace, to preserve you from falling into greater Sins, while you continue in the lesser; For by these lesser sins, you drive away God's Spirit, bring a Consumption on your Graces, and thrust the Almighty away from you. If he do keep you from greater Enormities, it is his superabundant Mercy and Goodness; but you cannot reckon upon't, you cannot be sure of it, you do enough to make him take away his Spirit, the Prop that must support you; and if that be gone, the House must fall, and great must be its Ruin. If God depart from you, you are left to the Malice of the Devil; and he'll be sure so to manage those lesser Sins in you, that they shall advance into hideous Offences; and so water the Tares, that are scattered up and down in your Souls, that the whole Field in time shall be over-run with them; and the Water that comes but to the Ancles now, shall e'er long come up to the Knees, to the Neck, and to the Head, and drown you.

Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-speaking, and Malice, How little do Men make of these Sins? Yet they grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by the Apostle's Verdict, *Eph. 4. 30, 31. And do*

you thus reward this Spirit of Love? Hath he deserved no better Dealings at your Hands? Is this the Recompence you give him for all the kind Motions and Whispers he hath followed you withal?

Doth not Reason tell you, that many little Sins, amount to a great one? Suppose you are not guilty of Adultery, yet if thou many wanton Thoughts, and unclean Desires of your Minds, were laid in the Balance with it, Would they not weigh as heavy as the greater Sin? Suppose you are not guilty of Murther, yet will not the many secret Grudges, and clandestine Contrivances against your Neighbour, tantamount to that Crime? Is it not all one, whether one *Goliath*, or a thousand *Philistines*, overcome you? Thou art no Thief, no Robber; but will not thy many covetous Wishes make up a Robbery? Were all thy idle Words laid together, How much would they want of Blasphemy? Thou art no Drunkard; but were thy frequent Abuses of God's Creatures summ'd up, thou would'st go near to put down *Nabal* for Drunkenness. The less any are, the more numerous are they commonly; and small Birds, by their number, may do as much Mischief, as one Kite or Eagle; and who knows not, that *Egypt* suffered more by the most contemptible Creatures, than by the greater Artillery of Heaven?

Tell me of any one Sin, that *Christ* hath dy'd for; if the very least Sin did help towards his Death and Crucifixion, why should not Mortification of little Sins be one great part of your Exercise? Can you remember, that these had a Hand in that Murther, and can you hug these Enemies in your Bosoms? Can you remember, that these, as well as the greater Crimes of Mankind, shar'd the Nails, and Spear, and Thorns, that wounded him, and kiss, and salute these? Did *Christ* find, even your unfavoury speeches, your looser Gestures, your obscene expressions, your carnal Thoughts heavy? Did even these help to crush him under the weight of God's Anger, and do you make sport with them. While you indulge yourselves in these lesser Sins, you run into greater Danger, and if you committed more fearful Iniquities; for there may be some hopes, that a gross Sin may startle a Man, and fright him to Repentance; but while he makes light of little Sins, he never repents of them, and goes on in them, and gathers a great many ticks together, that make up his burning pile. Little Sins become great ones, when they are justified as harmless: The Defence aggravates the Error; and remorseless continuance in them, makes their dye all Scarlet. What makes so many Hypocrites in the Christian Church, but this insensible-

ness of lesser Sins? These hinder Men from going on from Vertue to Vertue, and like a Moth eat away the Beauty and Splendour of their Virtues. Indeed, while you go on in these little Sins, you cannot rationally suppose, that your Names are written among the *Candidates of Heaven*; for Conversion makes the Soul cautious, even of the Appearance of Sin. And he is yet a Stranger to the work of Grace, that hath not learn'd to avoid the occasions of Evil; and he certainly begins at the wrong End, that begins to subdue his Obduracy, and Hardness in Sin, by suppressing the outward Act; for it is the evil Thought that causes Delight, Delight Consent, Consent Action, Action Habit, Habit Custom, Custom Perseverance, and Perseverance Hardness; therefore he that means to crush the Corruption, must begin at the little Sin, the evil Thought, or else he doth but beat the Air, and, like the Boy in the Story, that thought to pour out the Sea into a Nut-shell, attempt Impossibilities.

Christians, the Day will come when every Thing shall be called by its proper Name; and O how will you be surprized, when the Sins you look'd upon as inconsiderable, and unworthy of your deep Repentance, and Circumspection, shall be represented in Magnifying-Glasses, and appear, as they are indeed, dreadful and terrible: *Woe to them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil,* faith God,

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God, *Iſaiah* 5. 20. A threatening pronounced
not only against such as give Vertue the Name
of Vice, and Vice the Name of Vertue;
but such also, as make of great Sins, little
ones, and of little ones none at all. This
was the Trade of the *Pharisees*, and what
serious Man can read the Judgment denoun-
ced against them by the Son of God, and
not be afraid of being guilty of their Errour?
*Depart I pray you, from the Tents of these
wicked Men, and touch nothing of theirs,
lest ye be consumed in all their Sins,* cry'd
Moses to the Children of *Israel*, in the Case
of *Korah*, *Numb.* 16. 26. A Watch-word,
may give unto every one of you; Do you
know what Terror, what Anguish, what
Plagues our Great Master hath threatned the
Pharisees for their disregarding of little Sins,
and will you participate of their Ruin?

Come, Christians, believe the Word of
God, before your deceitful Hearts: That will
tell you, what is offensive to God, and shew
you, that even the least Sin, deserves Tears
more than Laughter, and Sorrow more than
Mirth and Divertisement: That will tell you,
that even these *Children of Edom* must be
dash'd against the Stones, if you would have
Peace within; and that *as dead Flies cause
the Ointment of the Apothecary to send forth
a stinking Savour, so doth a little Folly him
that is in Reputation for Wisdom and Ho-
nour,* *Eccles.* 10. 1. That will tell you,

Vincent.
Specul.
Histor.
L. 15.

Diabolus
Serpens
est lubri-
cus, cuius,
si capiti,
id est, pri-
mæ sugge-
stioni non
resistitur,
totus in
intima
cordis,
dum non
sentitur,
illabatur,
Isador. lib.
de Summ.
Bono, c. 1.

that a little Leaven leavens the whole Lump; and the only way not to be under a Temptation of sitting down in the Scorners's Chair, is, not to walk in the Counsel of the Ungodly. And to this purpose Barlaam in Damascene advises his Convert *Josaphat*; before all Things, in this Exercise thyself, even in the sedulous Destruction of all thy evil Thoughts, that nobler Conceptions may enter into thy Mind, and thy Soul may become a Habitation of the Holy Ghost: For from Thoughts, we come to Actions; and whatever Work we undertake, it hath its Rise in our Minds; and as small as its beginning seems to be, by degrees it grows bigger, and by silent Steps swells to a vast Magnitude: And for this Cause let no evil Custom exercise Dominion over thee, but while the Shrub of Sin is young and tender, pull up the little Root, lest being grown strong, and lusty, it be past thy Skill to eradicate it: For from hence it is, that greater Sins get access to our Hearts, because we apply no early Remedy to the lesser Errors, such, as are roving Thoughts, immodest Speeches, and evil Conferences; and as it is in wounded Bodies, if the slightest Hurts, and Bruises be neglected, the Wound festers, and gathers Corruption, and many times brings on Death, and excessive Torments; so he that's careless of little Sins, calls for greater to attend him.

Chri-

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Christians, 'There is not one Soul in Heaven now, but what watch'd against such little sins, when they sojourned here; and if they did not mind them for some time, yet they were forced to repent of them, and to subdue, and leave them, before ever they saw the Face of God in Glory. If this Heaven be worth your Care, if this Glory be worth your Pains, if this Everlasting Rest be worth your Endeavours, O say not of any sin, as *Lot of Zoar, Is it not a little* Gen. 19: *me, and my Soul shall live?* You may as well 20. say, I will break my Neck a little, and I will cut my Throat a little, and I will burn myself in Hell a little, as harbour the smallest sin. O tremble at any Thing that looks like it, Beware of *these Foxes, these little* Gen. 2.15. *Foxes that spoil the Vines:* Trust not these Vermin, but destroy them utterly; This is the Way to keep your Garments white, and to fit yourselves for the Wedding of the Lamb, and for those Mansions, at which no unclean Thing must enter.

Learn to die to the World; for it is your Fondness to that, which blinds you, dulls you, darkens your Understanding, and perverts your Affections, raises Clouds and Mists before your Eyes that you cannot see your Duty, or your Sins, and eclipses the Light of your Minds, that you can discern nothing, but grosser Offences; if you would have that Sun shine out clearly, you must not

not suffer this Moon to interpose between your sight, and it: This Moon is your Love to the World, which will put other Constructions, other Interpretations on your Sins, than your naked Reason would do. Set the Goodness of God before you; Reflect much on his Favours; Ruminat upon his Mercies: The Divine Goodness is of a melting, constraining nature; and the more lively you represent it to your Minds, the more it will compel you to part even with the least Transgression. Fancy you hear God pleading with you, *Sinner, What Iniquity hast thou found in me? Thou owest thy Life and Being to me, and all the Blessings thou hast, are mine: Canst thou be unkind, so inhumane, so ingrateful, as not to crucify so small a Sin for my sake? If I should withdraw my Presence from thee, take away all I have given thee, wouldst not thou complain, and mourn? But what mean these Provocations? Why dost thou compel me to cast thee off? Look back, and see whom thou dost offend by these, thou callest little sins. It is thy greatest Benefactor, and is not he worth pleasing, that hath greater Things in store to bestow upon thee, if the Favours he hath already showered down upon thee, can make thee intirely his? Think you hear such a Voice behind you. Compare your Losses with your Gains. Your little Sins are commonly your gainful Sins: They are Sins, wherein your carnal Ease, and the Satisfac-*
tion

tion of your sensual Appetite is concerned :
But grant, you get that sensual Satisfaction
you wish for, by these Sins, will it counter-
vail the Loss of God's Grace, the Loss of the
Light of his Countenance, the Loss of spiri-
tual Comforts, the Loss of inward Joy, the
Loss of Communion with your Maker? All
which you do certainly lose by your Affec-
tion to these Sins. Where is your Christian
Perfection, if you watch not against the
least sin? How do you put on the whole
Armour of God, if you arm not yourselves
against these common Souldiers of the De-
vil's Army? It is not the Officers, the Cap-
tains of his Hellish Host, I mean the great-
er Sins alone, that endanger you; These Gi-
beonites, that seem inconsiderable, that come
with Clouts upon their Feet, and look as if
they would do no great Harm; these lesser
Sins, are as big with Mischief, as the other,
for their Design is the same, viz. to engage
you in a League with Hell, in a Covenant
with Death, and to lay you open to the As-
saults of the Devil. In a Word, if you would
be rid of the least Sin, learn to live by Rule,
think by Rule, and speak by Rule, and work
by Rule, even by the Rule of the Word of
the Living God: *And as many as walk ac-
cording to this Rule, Peace be on them, and
on the whole Israel of God.*

The

The Prayer.

O Thou who art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity with the least Approbation! How have I been deceived! How have I been imposed upon by the World and my treacherous Heart! How securely have I swallowed in lesser Sins, and made a Mock of them. I see, Lord, what circumspection is necessary in a Christian Life. I repent of making so light of Things which have been offensive, and contrary to thy Holiness. Fool that I was, to imagine that anything can be trivial and light which thou hast forbid! Can any Order or Precept proceed from thee, but what is the Product of eternal Deliberation? Can anything be needless which thou settest thy Hand and Seal to? What low Thoughts must I have of thy Wisdom! What mean Conceptions of thy Omniscience, if I harbour such Imaginations! Dull blockish Creature that I am, when every Law thou makest, and every Work thou doest, and every Providence that comes to pass is done according to the eternal counsel of thy Will, built upon the strongest Pillars of Reason, and is an Effect of the brightest, clearest, and most unbiassed Understanding, how can any thing be little and inconsiderable that thou dost command. But alas! these are but the Pretences of my Lusts! they are loth to be deprived of their Pleasures, and therefore suggest such feeble

Argu-

Arguments. A little sin! what Nonsense is there in that Word! Why shouldst thou prohibit it? Why shouldst thou warn, entreat, and beseech me not to do it, but that thou who knowest all things, knowest it to be prejudicial to my Soul. It's a Sign I esteem, I prize thee not. Did I truly look upon thee as the loveliest Being, and my only and greatest Benefactor, I should be afraid of a disorderly Thought. O let me never judge of Sin any more by the sickly Fancies of carnal Men, but by the Holiness of thy Nature: And as thou, my God, who hast called me, art holy, so let me be holy in all manner of Conversation. O let me not dally with Sin any more, nor make sport with it, because the World calls it little, but let it be sufficient to me, that thou my God dislikest it, and make me entirely conformable to thy Will. Give me, O thou giver of every good thing, just Apprehensions of my Duty. Increase my Love to thy Name, and my Hatred of Sin will increase. O that I were more ravished with thy Beauty! how odious would every thing be to me that is injurious to thy Glory! O the infinite Obligations I have to love thee, and yet how cold is my Heart! and because it is cold, I startle at nothing but the greater Sins. O let me remember that I am a Christian, and have vowed myself to thy Service, and let me serve thee in keeping even of the least of thy Commandments. Discover to me the Equity and Reasonableness of every Precept, that I may plead

plead no Excuses, no Impediments, but break through all Obstacles, to express my Love. O let me esteem all thy Precepts concerning all things to be right, and let me hate every false way. Nothing can be lovely that thou forbiddest. Nothing can be sound that thou accusest of Rottenness. Nothing can be safe that thou warnest me against! I have found the Ways of Sin false indeed; false as Hell. When I have thought to step into the Bed of Pleasure, I have rush'd into a Gulph of Misery. When I have hoped to fill myself with Content and Satisfaction, I have run into Briars and Thorns, and filled my Heart with Heaviness, and I find I have been flatter'd into Ruin. O let me dread the very Appearance of Evil, and be thou my everlasting Sweetness, my everlasting Delight, my everlasting Comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

VII. Exercise.

Every Day to keep a strict Guard over our Eyes; an Exercise recommended to us, Job 31. 1. Psalm 119. 37. Matth. 5. 28, 29. Matth. 18. 9. By the Eye here, I do not mean the Eye of Contemplation, whereby Men see what is above them; nor the Eye of Reason, whereby they see, what is within them; but the Eye of the Body, which discovers to them the Things that are without them; and what Necessity there is for guard-

Regarding the Eye, the unhappy Examples
 of Persons, who have been lost for want of
 do sufficiently shew. When our Grand-
 mother *Eve* suffer'd her Eyes to wander on
 the Forbidden Tree, and pleas'd her sight
 with the lovely, but dangerous Fruit, we
 now and feel to this Day what was the
 effect of it, even the undoing of all her Po-
 tery. Had *Dinah*, the Daughter of *Ja-*
 kept within the Limits of her Father's
 house, and not gadded abroad, to see Fa-
 tions, and the wanton Behaviour of the
 daughters of the Land, she had not lost her
 virginity, nor been the Occasion of so much
 blood-shed. Had the *Fews* forbore looking
 on the Daughters of *Midian*, they had pre-
 vented the Plague, which broke in upon
 them, and consumed the chosen Men of *Israel*.
 Had *David* turned away his Eyes from *Bath-*
sheba, when he walked on the Plat-form of
 his House, neither *Uriah* had been killed, nor
 himself fallen into that Distress and Anguish,
 which afterwards came upon him. *Achan*
 loses his Life by his Eyes, and *Amnon*
 commits Incest. *Haman's* Eyes taking no-
 tice of *Mordecai's* Irreverence, occasions his
 death: And had the *Elders* in the Story,
 when they admir'd the Beauty of *Susanna*,
 look'd another Way, they had prevented
 their shameful and ignominious Execution.
 Had these Windows Covetousness, and Lasci-
 viousness, and Admiration of sensual Ob-
 jects,

Gen. 3. 6.

Gen. 34. 12.

Numb. 25.
1, 2.

2 Sam. 11.

Josh. 7. 21.
2 Sam. 13.
1, 2.

Esth. 3. 5.

πρὸς τὴν
τὸς τῷ σῶ-
ματι δὲ
αὐτοῦ ἵκον-
ται οἱ ὀφ-
θαλμοί,
Clem. A.

lex. Pedag.
l. 3. c. 11.

jects, and Envy, enter. At these Avenues they come in, and from these Gates the Passion is convey'd to the Heart and Entrails. At these Doors Grief comes in, which reaches

*Qui videt
is peccat,
qui te non
viderit, er-
go non cu-
piet facti
crimina lu-
men habet.*

Propert.
lib. 4. E-
leg. vid.
& Casp.
Barth. in
notis as
Claudian.

the Mind, and tears the Bowels: For who knows not, that it is more tolerable to hear than to see a Loss, or Misfortune? Did not the Covetous feed his Eyes with the sight of Gold; he would not forsake *Paradise* for *Sodom*, *Heaven* for *Earth*, and *God* for *Mammon*. Did the lustful Person deny himself, in seeing the tempting Object; he would not become a Slave to his Passion, nor stoop to such a fatal Servitude, as we see he doth; it's gazing on the *πολλὰ παρὰ τὰ καλά*, on the *Gaudes* and *Glories* of this World, makes the sensual Man admire nothing, but what favours of Satisfaction of the Flesh. Did not the Envious cast his Eyes on his Neighbour's Welfare, it would not grieve him to see his Equal or Inferior thrive and prosper. The Mother that looks upon her dying Babe, by that Look, increases her Grief; and he that sees himself despised and wrong'd; makes that Spectacle an Argument of his immoderate Sorrow and Vexation; so that guarding the Eyes is an Exercise which Duty, Interest, and Desire of our own Quiet, doth command.

This Exercise consists, *First*, In admiring nothing in the Creature, but the Creator's Glory. *Secondly*, In turning away our Eyes from

from any Object, which we have Reason to suspect as dangerous. *Thirdly*, In checking the Disorder which our seeing may cause in our Minds and Passions. *Fourthly*, In making greater use of the Eyes of our Minds, than of our Bodies.

I. In admiring nothing in the Creature, ^{Εἰς τὴν} but the Creator's Glory; what Beauty, ^{καθ' ὃν} what Harmony, ^{ἁρμονίαν} what Evenness, ^{βαθύτητα} what Exactness, ^{ἐξαιρέτως} what Perfection, we see in any Object, that ^{ἐν τῷ} must immediately lead us to admire the Supreme Cause, that gave it Being: His Fin- <sup>μύστα, σφαι-
ρὸν οὐδὲν</sup> ger must be taken Notice of, His Wisdom ^{ἐξ ἧς} magnified, His Bounty adored, His Power ^{ἐν τῷ} praised, His Munificence exalted, and the ^{τῶν καλῶν} Creature only look'd upon as the Work of ^{ἐκ τῆς κοίτης} his Hands, the Effect of his Providence, ^{ἐκ τῆς κοίτης} and the Product of his Goodness: He ^{ὡς δια-} that looks no farther than the Creature, ^{συνίσταται,} runs himself into Snares, and God justly suf- ^{ἔκ. καὶ} fers him to fall, that would not look higher, ^{γενεσι,} and from Earth cast up his Eyes to Heaven. ^{καὶ ἐν} Such a Man looks no farther than a Beast, ^{καὶ τὸ ἐν} and forgets that God gave him a Faculty to ^{παισὶν ἐ-} see more than irrational Animals; such a ^{παρεσθι-} Man hath nothing to keep him in awe, and ^{πεν τοῖς ἐ-} therefore is tempted to lay hold on the For- ^{αὐτὸ σῶ-} bidden Tree, which was only presented to ^{φροσύν. ὁφ-} his Eyes by way of Tryal: He that upon ^{δαλμοῖς} seeing the Loveliness and Beauty of a sub- ^{ὁρᾶν συνή-} linary Object, presently reflects on the God ^{σταί, Μ.} that made it; at the same time, furnishes ^{Antonin. 7} ^{Lib. 3.} ^{Sect. 2.}

K

him.

himself with Arguments to keep within the Bounds of seeing, and within the Borders of Virtue; for sure he cannot at the same time admire the Creator, and sin against him; That Reflection will put a stop to his sensual Desires, and as the Angel did *Balaam*, withhold him from going on to the King of *Moab*, I mean, to fulfil the Suggestions of a brutish Appetite.

2. In turning away our Eyes from any Object, which we have Reason to suspect as dangerous. There is no Man that observes himself, and knows what Sins and Errors he is most prone and inclined to, but must needs, or at least may know, what Objects are most likely to raise Disorders in his Soul; Experience hath taught him, and his frequent falls have been his School-masters. Such Objects must be shun'd, as the Pestilence; and if they come within sight, the Eyes must be cast down on the Ground, or shut; and as ridiculous as this may seem in the Eyes of the World, a Man in this case had better be laugh'd at by all his Acquaintance, than lose the Glory of his Self-denial. There is no dallying with such Objects. To see whether I am able to resist the Temptation, is to sin for Tryal's sake, and he is certainly safer that looks another way. Our greatest Wisdom, is to suspect our own Frailty; and the best Way to keep Sin out of the Mind, is to keep it out of the Eyes.

* What

What Sin we have formerly fallen into, we may fall into again; and he that knows not but he may, had best put himself out of all Danger, and that is, by not looking upon the enticing Object; and though it is not necessary to run away from it in great Fury, as *Paulus* in † *Cassian* did from the sight of a Woman, yet it's expedient to get as fast as we can from the Confines of that Fire, which is so apt to put our Passions into a Fever.

3. In checking the least Disorder, which our seeing may cause in our Minds and Passions. It's possible we may be surpriz'd, and the Object we behold unawares, may dart a covetous, or envious, or lascivious Thought into our Minds; and that Spark may fall upon the Passions; but here the Poison must be presently vomited up again, and the Seed of Evil dissipated, and our Souls clear'd of the dangerous Guest; the sudden Thought drown'd in the Waters of Repentance; and greater cautiousness for the future must be us'd, and the Child thus burnt must learn to dread the Fire; where this is neglected, and Men are careless of this Exercise, their Souls are in danger of being consumed; for those Sparks, if let alone, will soon put all into a doleful Conflagration; so necessary is it to resist the beginnings of these impurer Steams and Exhalations; and the Viper's bite can do no great harm, if something be ap-

* *Ex* δὲ
τέτων ἐ-
γερθῶντα
τὰ πᾶσι,
καὶ πᾶσι ἡ
ἐλπίς
παχυν-
μένη καὶ τα-
ραχυν,
τὸ οἰκεῖν
περὶ τὸ ὄν
ἀπερρέει
ἔρως,
Porphyr.
de abstin.
l. 1. Sect.
33.
† *Cassian*.
Collat. 7.
c. 27.

plied presently to stop the Inflammation. The first Disorder is soon check'd, when the greater Tumult cannot be quell'd or allay'd, but with very great Pains and Difficulty.

4. In making greater use of the Eyes of our Minds, than those of our Bodies, *Mat. 6. 22.* When St. *Anthony* the Hermit had a mind to comfort the Excellent, but Blind *Didymus* of *Alexandria*, he thus address'd himself to him. *Let it not trouble thee, that thou hast lost thy outward or carnal Eyes; for in being deprived of them, thou wantest only such Eyes, as Mice, and Flies, and Lizzards have; but rejoyce that thou hast Eyes of Angels, whereby God is seen, and a vast Light of Knowledge is kindled in thy Soul.* Indeed, were these Eyes but exercised more, those of the Body would have no such evil Influence upon the Soul. The intellectual Eye looks beyond the Clouds, transcends the Sky, and sees through all the Mists and Fogs of this present World, into Eternity. This beholds the Satisfaction of another World, and surveys the Treasure God hath laid up for them that fear him. This sees the Goodness of God, and causes other-guise Delights, than the Butter-flies and Gloe-worm of Earthly Glories do. This looks up to the everlasting Hills; and as the Eyes of Servants look unto the Hands of their Masters; and as the Eyes of a Maiden look unto the Hand of her Mistress; so this

waits

Ruff. Hist.

lib. 2. c. 7.

waits upon the King of Heaven, till he is pleased to answer in the still Voice of Love and Mercy: This scorns to stoop so low; as to see what Swine and Moles do here on Earth, and takes a view of God's Paradise, and of the blessed Shades, under which, the Souls of Glory rest without Disturbance or Molestation; and he that sees with this Eye, opens this often, and delights to behold Objects suitable and agreeable to its sublime and wonderful Fabrick; doth stupify the Pleasures his corporal Eyes suggest, and so qualifies them, that they make no more Impression, than Arrows shot against a brazen Wall, or Fortrefs made of Iron. In these particulars, this Exercise consists; and this is it we press upon you; this is it we exhort you to, and entreat you to employ yourselves in, as you would not bear the Name of Christians in vain.

We do not bid you with *Eusebius*, in *Theodore*, to shut your Eyes against the Flowers of the Field, or against the Stars of Heaven, and to put weights of Iron about your Necks, to keep your Eyes fixed upon the Ground; we do not persuade you with *Pachomius*, so to tye-yourselves up from the sight of all Mankind, as not to look upon so near a Relation as a Sister: *Simeon Stylita* and *Theodorus* would not see their own Mothers; *John* the Hermit, for fifty Years together, saw none of the Female Sex;

one *Sarah* lived threescore Years by a River, and never look'd upon it; one *Marcus* saluted his Mother, and one *Prior* his Sister with their Eyes shut; *Sylvanus* on Mount *Sinai*, was so afraid of having his Mind distracted with vain Thoughts, that he would not so much as look upon the Trees that grew in a Garden before him: But such superstitious Doings we do not set before you as Patterns to imitate; but the Thing we would have you learn to be masters of, is a Modesty of the Eyes, a serious Look, and a care of your Senses, that you may not look upon any thing that's like to breed vain Thoughts in your Understanding; your Eyes are sacred Things. The *Egyptians* represented God by them; As God therefore is Holy, so should the Eye be that represents him. Would you know what makes your Minds so frothy, and your Souls so weary of God's Service? Why, your Eye is never weary of seeing Objects that feed your Sensuality. What is it makes you so averse from reading Books that treat of God and Happiness? Why, your Eyes delight too much in reading Play-Books and Romances, and your Love to Wit is stronger than your Affection to Religion. What damps or dulls your admiration of God's Providences? Why? The vain Shews and Representations your Eyes are greedy after, throw Dust upon that Power of your Souls. What makes you that you

Ὁ οὐρανὸς
 ὁ οὐρανὸς
 τῆς παρθε-
 νος ἱατρει-
 ᾶς, τῶν
 πόρων
 φθίσις,
 ajebat Di-
 ogenes Di-
 dymoni
 mæcho,
 medico,
 cum cura-
 ret Virgi-
 nis oculi-
 lum, in
 Laert. l. 6.
 de Diog.

you are no more enamour'd with him,
 that's altogether lovely? Why? Your
 Eyes are entirely fixed on the Flesh, and
 on the World; How should you love that,
 which you see but seldom? How should
 you hunger and thirst after that, which
 you care not how rarely you cast your
 Eyes upon? You fancy Religion doth not
 reach so far as the Eyes, and think God hath
 given you Eyes on purpose to look with-
 out so much as the shadow of a Scruple on
 all Things visible. There is some Truth in
 that Opinion, but too often you are not a-
 ware of the Serpent, that lies in the Grass
 you look upon, and all is harmless to you
 that comes within the Verge of Sight; but
 these are not Thoughts of Men, that have
 learn'd Christ; these are not Reasonings of
 Men, that have laid up their Portion in a-
 nother World; this is the Sense of Men,
 that grovel in Dust, and know not what it
 means to walk after the Spirit: Your God,
 that knows your Frame, would never have
 made a Law to regulate the Sight, but that
 he knew that was the Hole at which the
 Scorpions creep in, that prey upon the Soul.
 Stop up this Fountain, and you need not
 fear its fatal Rivulets; God knew it was the
 quickest Sense, and therefore wisely orde-
 red us to make a Hedge about it, that

*Iaco hu-
 mani ge-
 neris Cre-
 ator &
 Conditor
 Deus opifi-
 cii sui na-
 turam pre
 omnibus e-
 mendatio-
 nemque
 cognoscens,
 illic curam
 adhibuit
 medicinae*

*unde causas morbi principaliter noverat emanare. Cassian. Institut. lib.
 6. c. 12.*

Thieves might not break in: He that stands Centry here, keeps his Castle safe, preserves the Purity of his Soul, maintains his Virgin Innocence, and truly enjoys himself, from the guarding of this Sense, the Soul comes to taste what inward Pleasure means, and can silently rejoyce in her Watchfulness and Victory: This lifts her up above herself, and makes her triumph in her Conquest; and watching thus, she advances her Glory into a Kingdom, Reigns within herself, and makes her Lusts come crouching to her Throne; or over-aw'd with her Majesty, creep away into Dens and Darknes.

This hath been the Care of Saints in all Ages, and this hath made their Memory famous. This Exercise the ancient Fathers pressed, and upon such Sermons the wanton World began to be reform'd: This made the Virgins cover their Faces with Veils, that they might neither tempt others with their Beauty, nor be tempted with the comely Looks of their Spectators: This made the World take notice of the holy Looks of Christians, and observe, how with their Lives and Conversations, the Motions of their Eyes, and all their Gestures changed: The Man, whose Eyes did rove before on every Female he met withal, upon his turning to God, fix'd them on the Ground, or on Hell, which he thought he had deserved: The Quickness of their Eyes was lost with their Sins; and the Wanton-

Wantonness of their Looks; expired with
their Viciousness and Debaucheries. They
consider'd, that their Reason was given
them to govern their Senses; and they justly
thought, that in vain they pretended to a
life of Reason and Religion, without they
subdued their Senses, and fenced all those
passages where Sin and Folly used to enter.
This gave Religion credit, and made Men
come from the *East* and *West* to gaze upon it.
This made the World wonder to see Humane
Nature rise so high, and come to that pitch of
sanctity, which even the *Heathen Gods* had
been Strangers to.

Athenagor.
legat. pro
Christ.

He that thus guards his Eyes, is the Man
that sees; whereas the other, that *walks in*
the sight of his Eyes, is blind; and let him re-
member, that even for his *Looks*, God *shall*
one Day call him to Judgment, Eccles. 11.

They were excellent Arguments Se-
neca gave to him that had lost his Eyes;
Thou complaineest, saith he, *I have lost mine*
Eyes; even this Darknes hath its Pleasure:
Lost thine Eyes? What great matter hast
thou lost? How many base and filthy Lusts
roud the Way thou walkest in? Thou art
happy, for thou wilt want abundance of
things, which were worth pulling out thine
Eyes, that thou mightest not see them: Thou
considereest not, that Blindness is a sort of
Innocence: Alas! What are the Eyes? Such
a Man they prompt to Adultery; another
they

Senec. in
excerpt.

they entice to unnatural Copulation; another they tempt to covet his Neighbours House; another they put upon laying Siege to a City; another they seduce into all manner of Miserie; so that in losing thine Eyes, thou hast lost nothing else, but Incentives to Vice, and Occasions of Iniquity. Indeed, without a Man learns to guard his Sense, it had been better for him, that he had never seen the Sun, or that he had lost his Eyes as soon as he came into the World, for that Misfortune would yet have quickned the Eyes of his Understanding, and help'd him with Moses, to look upon him that is invisible by the Eye of Faith, and at last he might have obtained the End of his Faith, even the Salvation of his Soul; whereas, by his unhappy seeing, he besots himself, falls in love with the World; hugs the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, fancies no Satisfaction like that, which gratifies his Sense, and so remains a Stranger to Peace of Conscience and Joy in the Holy Ghost; and too often continues insensible, till with Dives, he lifts up his Eyes in Hell, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom, and finds by sad Experience, what he has lost and slighted.

Plutarch.
Pericl. &
Cicer. Of
fic. l. 1.

It was worthily said of *Pericles*, when *Sophocles* his Companion, shew'd him an extraordinary Beauty, and seem'd to be taken with it, *It is not enough to keep clean Hands*

h Sophocles! but you must keep your Eyes
 clean too. Though he was a Heathen, yet
 in this he spoke like a Christian, and confor-
 mably to our Religion, which bids us keep
 both the outside and the inside clean; and
 indeed there can be no Purity of Heart, with-
 out Purity of the Senses; and to this Pur-
 pose there is an excellent Discourse in St.
 Jerome, or who-ever be the Author of the
 Comment upon the *Lamentations*, to be
 found in St. Jerome's Works: *Let's not look*
upon that, which we are forbid to lust af-
ter; That the Mind may be preserved pure,
the Eyes must be press'd down, as Slaves,
that ravish Men to sin. If the Mother of the
living by her Eyes procured her own Death,
we ought to consider how necessary it is to
take our Eyes into Custody: Mine Eye hath
rob'd my Heart, saith the Prophet; for co-
meting after Things visible, it loses its invi-
ble Vertues: He that loses his Sense of God
within, suffers the Eye of his Body to com-
mit Robbery in his Heart: Therefore if we
would be Masters of our Hearts, let's be
Masters of our Senses too; for though the
Mind be never so grave, yet the Childish
Senses of the Body make so fearful a Noise
sometimes, that if they be not over-power'd by
the weight of Reason, and with a juvenile
kind of Heat restrain'd, they'll render the
Mind effeminate and feeble,

Lament.
 3. 51.

The

The Prayer.

O Thou whose Eyes are like Flames of Fire, and whose Feet like Brass glowing in a Furnace, who are brighter than the Sun, and clearer than the Stars, whose Eyes run to and fro through the World to shew thyself strong in the behalf of those whose Heart is upright before thee: I have deserved that no Eye should pity me, because I have not used my Sight with that Moderation, Modesty, Decency, and Piety thou justly requirest of me. I have bad Eyes, and have not seen those Things I should have taken notice of: It were just with thee to strike me Blind, and to deprive me of that Mercy which I have so often turned into Wantonness! I have stared upon Objects that have inflamed my Lusts, irritated my Passions, and kindled Hell-fire in my Breast. Ah! What impure, what disorderly Thoughts have I let in through these Windows! Wonder, O my Soul, that Vengeance hath not pulled them out, or that Darkness hath not yet seized on them. What Discontent, what Mistrust of thy Providence, what Pride, what Envy, what Malice, what Revenge hath crept into my Soul through these Glasses! How ill a use have I made of the Gift of God! How have I dishonoured my Creator with these Eyes! How covetous, how vain, how sensual hath my Sight of the Riches
and

and Pleasures of the World made me! O look
on me, and have Mercy on me. Open thou
mine Eyes, that I may see wondrous Things
of thy Law. O let nothing be so pleasant
to mine Eyes as thy marvellous Works. Teach
me to see thee in thy Providence, and in thy
Works of Grace and Nature. O let me remem-
ber that where-ever I am, I am before the
face of thy Glory, and let mine Eyes be ever
ward the Lord. If my right Eye offend me,
pull it out. Give me Courage to turn
away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity, when
Vanity would make me enamour'd with
the World. Quicken the Eyes of my Mind
that I may behold thy Power and Glory, as I
have seen it in the Sanctuary. Shew me the
Danger of walking in the Sight of mine Eyes,
and guide me by thine Eye. Destroy in me all
fleshy Looks, and the Lust of the Eye do thou
remove far from me. See, O Lord, and con-
sider my Wants, and teach me to offer unto
thee my reasonable Service. Let my outward
as well as inward Man be thy Servant. O
let me see, and taste, how Sweet and how Gra-
tious thou art. Thou hast given me my Eye-
sight, cause me to see thy Salvation; and let
me see that I walk circumspectly, as Wise
Men, and not as Fools, redeeming the Time,
because the Days are Evil. Consider, and
hear me. O Lord my God, lighten mine
Eyes, lest I sleep the Sleep of Death. Keep
me as the Apple of thine Eye; bid me under
the

the Shadow of thy Wings: Then shall I behold thy Face in Righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness. O glorious Sight, when I shall see thee as thou art! How ravishing will that Prospect be! How transporting that Vision! O let me not miss of it! O let me not lose that charming Spectacle! I will look upon thee here. I will behold thee in the Blessings I enjoy. I will see thee in thy Mercies, and admire thee. I will look to myself, that I may not err from thy Commandments. I will look for the new Heavens and the new Earth, wherein dwell Righteousness. I will look up, and please myself with the Thoughts of Mount Sion, which fades not away. I will look unto the Lord, that I may be enlightned, and my Face may not be ashamed, through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.

VIII. Exercise.

Every Day as there is occasion, to make good use of the Virtues and Vices of our Neighbours, or those that have lived before us, and whose Actions we have either read or heard of; an Exercise commanded, Luk. 13. 2, 3. 1 Cor. 10. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Rom. 15. 4. The Chaldee Paraphrast upon the 34th Chapter of Deutronomy, tells us, God taught us to cloath the Naked, when he made Adam and Eve Coats of Skin, and cloathed them. And taught us to marry in the Lord, and in the Fear of God, when he joyn'd them together

gether: And taught us to visit the Sick, when he revealed himself to Abraham, being re with the Circumcision of his Flesh: And taught us to comfort those that mourn, when he manifested himself to Jacob, coming back from Padan, in the Place where his Mother died: And taught us to feed the Poor, when he sent Bread to the Children of Israel from Heaven: And taught us to bury the Dead, when himself was pleased to bury Moses, the Man of God, and charge his holy Angels to attend his Corpse to the Place of his Interment, over-against Beth-Peor, to the Confusion of that Idol. So far the Interpreter, though Jew, is in the Right: But this is not all, not only God's Actions, but the Actions of our Neighbours must be improved to our Spiritual Profit and Advantage. And this Exercise consists partly in imitating the good Actions, partly in shunning the Bad, or such as we have Reason to suspect as Evil, and contrary to the Will of God.

I. In imitating the Good; *Whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, wherever you see it, in whomsoever you meet with it, whether in a Jew, or Heathen,* Omni-
bus, ad quos
studio dis-
cendi per-
gebat obe-
diens, pro-
prias sin-
gularum
gratias
hauriebat,
hujus con-
tinentiam,
cunditatem illius sectabatur, istius lenitatem, illius vigilantiam, alterius
gendi amulabatur industriam, &c. St. Athanas. Vit. Anton. c. 3.

or

or Christian, *think on these Things*, and imitate them, saith the Apostle of the Gentiles *Phil. 4. 8.* Such a Christian is eminent for Meekness, another eminent for Patience, a third eminent for Peaceableness, a fourth eminent for Modesty, a fifth eminent for Charity, a sixth for Humility, a seventh for spiritual Joy, another for Self-denial, another for Temperance, another for pardoning of Injuries, &c. To look upon these Patterns is not enough, but then we Exercise ourselves to Godliness, when we reason ourselves into Imitation, some such way as this, How lovely is this Virtue! How amiable this Temper! How beautiful this Gift! How great a Commendation is it to this Man to be so qualified! What Content must it cause in him to be so gracious, so favoured of God, and so well dispos'd! What should hinder me from following him? Why should not I tread in his Steps? Why should not his Practice kindle in me desires, to arrive to the same Happiness? Could he be Master of this Grace, and why cannot I? Is not the same God alive? The same Spirit ready to assist me? Have not I the same Means of Grace to help me? Suppose my Condition is not the same with his, yet is there any Condition, which a Man may not, or is not obliged to be good in?

Tavern.

Descr. Seragl. c. 16.

Leo de Moden. Cerem.

Jud. p. 38.

If I go among the *Turks*, I shall see the highest as well as the lowest, the Emperor, as well as the meanest Subject, rise by break

of Day to praise God. If I go among the

Fec

Jews, I shall find, that they will begin no Work, do nothing about their Houses, nothing of Business, till they have been at their Prayers. If I go among the *Heathen*, I shall find, that though their Goods and Houses, and all they have, and their Lives at boot, were in Danger, they would not break off in the midst of the Service of their Gods, but stay till they have done. Can I imagine, that these Examples are represented to me without a Providence? Can I imagine, that these are no Invitations to convert those good Customs into Practice? Is not this Call enough to baptize and to adopt them into Christianity? Shall a *Heathen*, a *Turk*, a *Jew*, out-doe me in Holiness? If they do, Matth. 12. 42. shall not *the Queen of the South rise against me in the Day of Judgment, and condemn me, who came from the farthest Parts of the Earth, to hear the Wisdom of Solomon, but greater than Solomon is here?*

In the same manner, if I read the Bible, and meet with excellent Endowments of Men, I am idle, and lazy, and, like that slothful Servant in the Gospel, hide my Talent in a Napkin; if reading of the Zeal of *Moses*, of the Contentedness of *Job*, of the even Spirit of *David*, of the Stedfastness of

bi placuit & vita & oratio, & ipsius animum ante te ferens, & vultum semper tibi ostende, vel custodem vel exemplum, opus est, inquam, aliquo ad quem mores nostri seipsos exigant, nisi ad regulam, prava non corrigitur, Senec. Epist. 11. Vid. & Ep. 6.

L

Dani-

Elige itaque Catonem si hic videtur tibi nimis rigidus, elige remissioris animi virum Lelium elige eum cujus

Daniel, of the Constancy of *Shadrach, Meshech* and *Abednego*, of the Faithfulness of *Samuel*, of the Circumspection of *Enoch*, of the early Piety of *Josiah*, of the Candour of *St. Paul*, of the Sincerity of *Nathanael*, of the strong Faith of *Abraham*, of the Almshouses and Prayers of *Cornelius*, of the Fervency of *St. Peter*, of the Readiness of the *Bertheans* to receive the Word, of the Jaylor and *Philippi* his Earnestness to be saved; I say, I wrong my Conscience if I do not force myself to follow these Examples. Indeed this is the End of God's setting these Examples before me; and except I make these Instances my Patterns, I read the Scripture unprofitably.

It's true, when the good Actions I meet withal in Scripture, are peculiar to the Place, or peculiar Calling and Office of the Saint that wrought them, as the Prophet saying to the Man that met him, *Smite me* *I pray thee*, 1 Reg. 20. 37. And the Apostles taking neither Gold nor Silver in their Pockets when they went to preach the Gospel, and shaking of the Dust of their Feet against that House that would not receive them, and where the Actions of holy Men recorded there, have only respect to the Time they lived in, as Circumcision, and offering Sacrifices, and outward Purifications, Things proper only for the Oeconomy of the Ritual Law, or where the Actions of such persons

ous Men are extraordinary and miraculous, as cleansing the Lepers, raising the Dead, healing the Blind, where the good Actions are of this Nature, I am not bound to exercise myself so, as to study Imitation; but all those Actions, which they did in conformity to the Moral Law of God, and the Dictates of Nature, and the Rules the Gospel prescribes to all Christians, there I am bound to look upon these Examples as Voices from Heaven, to summon me to make that use of them I have been mentioning.

St. *Austin* is very confident of this, and adds, that the Examples of Saints are those

*Austin. in
Psalm. 119.*

hot burning Coals the Psalmist speaks of, *Psalm 120. 4.* Whereby a deceitful Tongue may be burnt into a better Temper. By these, saith he, God calls to us. *This Man could do so, and cannot you? Art thou more delicate than such a Senator? Art thou weaker than such a Woman? Art thou more afraid than such a Mighty and Wealthy Man? Could they do this, and cannot you? Could a Mary Magdalen weep, and cannot you? Could a Wealthy Zachæus confess his Sin, and make Restitution, and turn, and cannot you? Could a Paulus Sergius, a great Commander, leave his Place and Dignity, to keep a good Conscience, and cannot you? Could a Centurion, a Captain, a Man of Arms, stoop to the humble Laws of the Gospel, and cannot you? Could they, that had greater*

Impediments than you have, embrace Christ's Yoke, and cannot you? Could they, that had more to plead for their Refusal of God's Offers, than you, flight, and leave all, and follow Christ, and cannot you? Could they leave Lands, and Houses, and Father, and Mother, and Life itself, for the Gospel, and cannot you part with a Trifle for Heaven's Glory? Did they think nothing too costly to part for the Pearl of Price, and will not you quit one Lust, one darling Bosom-Sin for it?

Nor is this only to be observed in Scripture-Passages, but in Civil Histories too. I may chance to read of the Admirable and Heroick Acts of *Pagans* and *Infidels*; of the Continnence of *Scipio*, who being but four and twenty Years of Age, young, lively, and what is more, a Conqueror; and having taken a young Lady Prisoner, of noble Blood and wonderful Beauty, did not only dismiss her to her Friends undefiled, but added the vast Sum of Money, brought for her Ransom, as an Augmentation of her Portion. I may light upon such an Example as that of *Curius*, who being presented with a great Quantity of Gold by the *Samnites*, though poor, refused it, saying, He had rather rule over a Wealthy People, than be Wealthy and Rich himself; so I may read of the Moderation of *Metellus*, of the Constancy of *Phocion*, of the Sobriety

Valer.

Max. Lib.

4. c. 3.

briety of *Socrates*, of the Meekness of *Archytas*, of the Chastity of *Spurina*, of the Gratitude of *Massanissa*, of the Gravity of *Aristides*, of the Temperance of *Epicurus*, of the Patience of *Regulus*, of the Liberality of *Hiero*, &c. Even here I must not be a careless Reader of these Virtues, but make this Inference from them: If these Men arrived to such Perfection by the Light of Nature, what a Shame and Disgrace will it be to me, if assisted by the Light both of Grace and Nature, I fall short of it.

2. The same Method must be observed in the Sins and Vices of others, whose Example must fright us from those Sins, and stir up our Hatred against them, and draw the same Language from us, it did from *David*, Psal. 139. 21. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee, and am I grieved with those that rise up against thee?* I must not see a

Drunkard, either in the Streets, or in a private House, without working my Soul into Detestation of his Brutishness: The Swearer's Oath must fill me with Horror, and the Covetous Man's Wishes have this happy Effect upon me, as to set me against that damnable Iniquity. *Cain's* Despair must make me shun the Sins that brought it; and *Lot's* Incest must fill me with Wonder, how a Preacher of Righteousness could sink into such Abominations. The *Sodomites* Stubbornness must melt me, and *Esau's* Pro-

Nequaquam avicula circumiverit granum si alliamavem in laqueo pendentem viderit; Tu ex aliorum damnationis exemplum capit. Saadi. Gulist. p. m. 262.

phaneness make me serious and humble. *Saul's* Disobedience must produce Self-Resignation in me to the Will of God. And *Doeg's* Treachery must oblige me to Faithfulness; *David's* Adultery must make me take heed, lest I fall; and *Solomon's* Idolatry make me suspect mine own Wisdom. *Nebuchadnezzar's* Pride must make me loath the Vice, and *Belshazzar's* Luxury make me tremble. *Judas* his Greediness after Money must oblige me to a charitable Liberality; and I then read of *Demas's* embracing this present World with some Advantage, if it causes strong Resolutions in me to follow the Lamb, whethersoever he goes. The *Pharisees* Unbelief must make my Faith stronger; and the *Sadducees* denying a Resurrection, must make me with Care and Earnestness prepare for it. The Uncleanneſs of *Nicolaitans* must make me proclaim War against all unlawful Lusts; and the Angel of *Laodicea's* Lukewarmness must kindle such a Zeal in me, as will carry me beyond all Oppositions. *Sylla's* Cruelty must teach me to apply myself to Meekness; and *Annibal's* Haughtiness teach me Moderation in Prosperity. *Tatius* his Presidiousness must lead me to Sincerity; and *Cleopatra's* Extravagance persuade me to Temperance. And this is to make Medicines of Poisons; and he that excells in this Art, is a greater Physician than *Hippocrates*, and out-does *Galen*

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at his Weapon. Acting thus, we imitate Bees which suck Honey even from stinking Flowers; and there is no Chymistry like that, which extracts Good out of Evil, and transforms the Devil himself into an Angel. Your Transmutations of Iron into Gold are nothing to this *Alchymie*; and all that the World hath talk'd of the Philosopher's Stone, falls short of this holy *Metamorphosis*. Let the Sins of others attract sensual Men into Delight and Compliance, a Christian must live above that sordid Condescension, and the Follies of his Neighbour, that Frost of the Soul, by a kind of *Antiperistasis*, must make the Fire of his Zeal against those Offences scorch the more, as their Virtues must make him grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

This is your Work, my Friends, this is the Task the God of your Fathers hath set you; in this Race you are to run, the good Works of those you converse withal, or that you hear mention'd by others, you are to transcribe upon your Lives. As Light doth naturally issue out from Fire, and Flowers send forth a delightful Fragrancy; so from the Light or Commemoration of Holy Mens Actions proceeds very great Advantage and Emolument, faith (a) (a) Homil. in Gord. mart. St. *Basil*. This is to draw Pictures from Divine Images. Thus did the Men *Potitianus*

(b) *Aug. Confess. Lib. 8. c. 6.* spake of to (b) *St. Austin*; as they were walking forth to take the Air, they lighted upon a Cottage, where some very Religious Persons lived; and taking a view of their

(c) *Habet nunquamque propositum Principes suos; Romanus Duxces imitentur, Camillos, Fabricios, Scipiones, Philosophi proponant Pythagoram, Socratem, Platonem, Aristotelem, &c. Nos autem habeamus propositi nostri Principes, Paulus & Antonius, Julianus, Hieronymus, & Macarius, &c. Hieron. Epist. ad Paulin. de inst. Mon. (d) Basil. Epist. ad Eustach. Episc. Seb.* Devotion, and manner of Conversation, and meeting with a History of a certain Holy Man's Life in one of the Rooms, they read it, and from these Considerations were so transported, that immediately they resolved to become Friends of God, and Holiness; and so (d) *St. Basil* professes of himself, *When I saw (saith he) about Alexandria, and in other Parts of Egypt, in Palestine, Coelosyria, and Mesopotamia, divers Men that had consecrated themselves to the Service of God, I could not stand amazed at the Strictness of their Diet, their Patience in holy Labours, their Vigour and Constancy in Prayer; when I observed, how neither conquer'd with Sleep, nor overcome with the Infirmities of their Natures, they kept up, and maintain'd a lively Sense of God, mocking both Hunger and Thirst, both Cold and Nakedness, as if they lived in another World, and their Souls dwell'd in a Spiritual Body, and nothing would satisfy them, but bearing in their Bodies the Marks of the Lord Jesus; I began to envy their Happiness, and thought it long, till I attained to their Felicity.*

It was the Jaylor's taking Notice of *St. Paul* and *Silas*, their praying and praising God

God at Midnight, and their wonderful Courage, and Evenness of Mind in the midst of their Chains, *Acts 16. 29, 30.* That caused an Earthquake in his Soul, and made him restless, till they shew'd him a Way to attain to those Sweets and Delicacies of a Conscientious Life, which he saw they had Experience of. We read of *Jacob, Gen. 30. 37, 38, 39.* That *he took him Rods of green Poplar, and of the Hazel and Chesnut, and pilled white Strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the Rods, and he set the Rods, which he had pilled before the Flocks in the Gutters, in the watering-Troughs; when the Flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink; and the Flocks conceived before the Rods, and brought forth Cattel ring-streaked, speckled and spotted: What are these Rods, saith S. Gregory? and what is it to lay them before the Flock, but to set before us the Sayings and Actions of our pious Ancestors, that we may be regenerated, that we may be whiten'd, that we may bring forth such Fruits as they have born.*

Thy two Breasts are like two young Roes that are Twins, which feed among the Lillies, saith *Christ* to the Church, *Cant. 4. 5.* By these two Breasts, some of the Primitive Writers understand the Jewish and Gentile Christians, such as love Christ cordially, and the Lillies among which they feed, are the

Gregor.
Moral.
lib. 21. c. 1.

Euseb.
Eccl. Hist.
lib. 3. c.
39.

the innocent and spotless Lives of sincere Believers, which nourish, and cherish their Souls, make them lively and vigorous, and flourishing; These purify their Minds. These give them the Whiteness of Milk, and nothing digests with them better, than this Heavenly Food. I dislike not the Practice of *Papias* (had it been but carried on with greater Discretion) who was mighty inquisitive, what *Andrew*, what *Philip*, what *Peter*, what *James*, what *John*, what *Matthew*, and what the rest of the Apostles of our Lord had done, and what they used to say; how they ordered their Lives, what their Conversation was, how they behaved themselves Abroad, and at Home, for by such Enquiries a Man may learn much, improve himself, advance in Goodness, and encourage himself to the severest Acts of Religion, which by having such Patterns before us, become easy, and lose much of that dreadful Aspect, in which they do appear to Flesh and Blood.

Behold, Christians, here lies your Wisdom; This is to be wise unto Salvation; This is the Learning, and that must fit you for the University of the third Heaven; This is the Scholarship, without which you lose your Places in that College of Glory. Study this Point, and you'll be wiser than *Aristotle*, Learned than all the Sages at *Athens*; all the Wisdom of *Solomon*,

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on, without this Skill, would have done
m but little good. Behold the Fountain
of your Comforts! Would you be supported
in Distress? Would you be preserved from
fainting under Troubles? Would you bear
up under the greatest Storms? Would you
hold out in the greatest Persecutions? Survey
the Heroick Actions of the Martyrs and Con-
fessors of old, and they'll shed new Life in-
to your Spirits, strengthen you beyond Ex-
pectation, keep you from Despair, defend
you against Discouragements, and make you
weather all the Tempests that come against
you. Are you reproach'd? Look upon *Da-
vid*, how patiently he endured the Revi-
lings of *Shimei*; Are you persecuted for
Righteousness Sake? Look upon the Apo-
stles of our Lord, how they rejoiced that
they were counted worthy to suffer for the
Name of the Lord Jesus; Do you suffer
wrongfully? Look unto Jesus, the Author
and Captain of your Salvation, who for the
Glory set before him, endured the Cross,
and despised the Shame. Are you bound
with Chains? look upon St. *Paul*, how he
glories in those Shackles, and is confident,
that they will promote God's Glory. Do
Friends forsake you? Look upon *Lazarus*
whom God took Care of, when none would
regard, or relieve him.

Nay,

Nay, in Death itself, the sweet and heavenly Frame of Spirit, that is to be found in the Saints of God, will be of very great Efficacy to arm ourselves against the Assault of that last Enemy: When Death approaches, look upon the Courage, the Joy, the Comfort, the Resolution and Chearfulness

(a) Euseb.
Hist. Eccl.
lib. 4. c.
15. & l. 5.

(b) Hieron.
in vita Hil.
lar. c. 38.

(c) Ruffin.
vit. Patr.
lib. 3. Sect.
159.

of (a) Polycarp, of Ignatius, of Epagathus, of Sanctus, Maturus, Attalus, Blandina, Biblis, Alexander, and others. Come forth my Soul, said (b) old Hilarion, Why art thou afraid? Venture into another World; Wilt thou doubt? Hast thou served Christ long, and dost thou tremble? The Saint (c) Ruffinus smil'd, and laugh'd three Times when he was a dying. Being ask'd by his Friends, that stood about him mourning and weeping, why at the Point of Death he presumed to laugh? The first Time, said he I laugh'd, because I saw you so strangely afraid of Death. The second Time I did so because the World deludes you so, that you cannot find in your Hearts to prepare for Death: And I smil'd the third Time, because just now I am going from my Labour to rest, from my Pains and Toil here below to everlasting Quietness in Heaven. St. Jerome, when he was departing, thus addressed himself, or is at least brought in (and suppos'd to address himself) to his Friends that stood about him: *Throw off your Mourning Weeds, and sing a Psalm of Praise to God*

Euseb. vel
quicumque
fuit Autor
Epist. ad
Damasc. de
Morte Hieron.

hitherto I have gone through Fire and
Water, but now I am entering into my Cool-
ing-places: O what a mighty gainful Thing
Death to me! For Christ with all his Me-
rits and Benefits will be mine. Behold, my
Friends, the Earthly Tabernacle of my House
going to be dissolved, that I may enter into
another made without Hands, eternal in the
Heavens: I am going to put off Corruption,
that I may put on Incorruption: Hitherto I
have been a Traveller, but now am going to
my own Country. I see the Prize before me,
for which I have been running so long: I am
come to my desired Heaven: I am passing
from Darknes to Light, from Poverty to
great Riches, from Fighting to Victory, from
Sorrow to Joy, from a Temporal to an Ever-
lasting Life, from an Offensive Dunghill to
odoriferous Fields. The Life of this World,
no Life, but Death. The Merchandise of
Death is more precious than that of Gold
and Rubies. O sweet, O comfortable Death!
certainly thou art no King of Terrors, for
thou givest true Life, thou chasest Fevers
and Wounds, and drivest away Thirst and
Famine: Come then, my Beloved, my Spouse,
my Friend, my Sister, shew me where he
dwells, whom my Soul doth love. Awake my
Glory, lend me thy Hand, draw me after
thee. My Heart is ready, I'll rise and fol-
low the Perfume, I smell, till thou bring me
into my Father's House. Thou art lovely, my
Friend,

*Friend, come, do not tarry. By thee I
go into the Garden of my Beloved, that I may
eat of his Fruit. The Time is come for thee
to have Mercy on me, make haste, fly to me
for I am sick of Love. Thou art black, but
comely, thy Lips drop Honey. Thou art ter-
rible to the Kings of the Earth, and crush-
est the Spirits of Princes; but to the Humble
thou makest thy Power to be known. Thou
breakest the Horns of the Wicked, and liftest
up the Righteous: Open to me, my Sister,
thou Gate of Life. Take away my Coat
this Mortal Coat which I wear, and deck
me with the Garment of Praise and Glad-
ness. Break the Bow and the Shield, the
Sword and the Battle. Harden not thy Heart
against me. Take pity of a hungry Son, that
hath lived long in a strange Country, and
deliver him back to his own Father again.*

Thus departed that Holy *Presbyter*; thus
he spoke; and thus he died: What excellent
Cordials are such Patterns to a dying Christian!
He that takes a View of them, learneth
what to say, and how to speak to God, and
to his own Soul, when he is going to leave
this present World. Hypocrites commonly
compare themselves with Men, that are worse
than themselves; and finding themselves bet-
ter than the worst of Men, stroak themselves
for excellent Saints: Because they are not so
bad as others, therefore they must be very ad-
mirable Christians: Because they do some-
thing

ing more than those that know not God,
herefore they think they do enough, as much
is necessary to Salvation. But a Christian,
indeed, a Christian, that is altogether so,
looks forward upon those that are better than
himself, and by these he takes Example, and
to come up to their Perfection, is a great Part
of his Exercise. *I heard the Noise of the li-*
ving Creatures, that touch'd one another,
saith Ezekiel; an Emblem of the Saints edi-
fying one another, and touching one another
by their Virtues; and exciting one another to
Proficiency in the Ways of Seriousness. God
hath not given all Perfections to one Man,
least he should be exalted above Measure.
But this Christian hath what thou hast not;
and thou hast that which is denied to him,
that considering the Good he hath not, and
which is to be seen in thee, he may prefer
thee before himself in his own Thoughts:
And again, that thou who see'st that in him,
which thou hast not, may'st give him the grea-
ter Respect and Honour. Counterfeit Chri-
stians consider not wherein other Men excel
them, but wherein they excel others: They
take no Notice what Gifts their Neighbours
have received above their own, but what E-
vil others do commit, and wherein they fall
short of them; and thus their Spiritual Pride
leads them on to carnal Security, and that
carnal Security entitles them to the Portion,
which is reserved for Hypocrites. I have not
that

Ezek. 3.
13.

that Virtue another hath, that I may labour to be a Master of it; and another possibly wants that Grace I have, that he may be restless, till he hath attained to it; so true is that saying of the Apostle, *The Eye cannot say unto the Hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you,* 1 Cor. 12. 21.

The Prayer.

Most Merciful Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth, who hast given me a Soul apt to be led by Examples, and hast set most excellent Patterns before me, that I might follow their Steps; encline my Heart. I beseech thee, to consider the large Provision thou hast made for my better Part, and let me not stand in mine own Light, and continue Blind in the midst of so many shining and burning Lights. Arise, O Lord, and deliver me from the Wicked, from the Men which are on thy left Hand, O Lord, from the Men of the World, who have the Portion in this Life, and whose Bellies thou fillest with thy hid Treasure. O let me see with other Eyes than carnal Men do see. O raise my Mind, and carry it up to the Holy Mount, to the Mount of God, and from thence let me behold the Portion of thy Children, of those excellent Souls, that despise the World, and labour for Honour and Immortality. Discover to me the Comforts and Satisfaction they enjoy in

†

thy

by Bosom; and how thou makest them drink
of the Rivers of thy Pleasures. Let their
Faith encourage me to believe in Hope, a-
gainst Hope, that as they are made perfect
in Love, so I may be perfect too, and may be
one with thee, even as thou and they are one.
I cannot have a better Example than thyself,
O make me Partaker of thy divine Nature.
Give me a holy Ambition to be like thee. Make
me merciful, as my Father in Heaven is mer-
ciful. O let that Mind be in me, which was
also in Christ Jesus. O Jesu, attract my
Soul with thy Beauty. Teach me to tread in
thy Steps. Let thy Example be ever before
me; and where-ever I am, let me do nothing
unworthy of it. If I follow thee, I cannot
err: Thou art the Way, the Truth, and the
Life. Lord, do thou appear very amiable
to my Soul, that this Sight may constrain me
to learn of thee. Transcribe thy Graces on
my Soul, and Life, that my Conversation may
show that I am thy Disciple indeed, resolved
to live, and die, and rise with thee to eter-
nal Glory. Give me the Spirit of St. Paul:
Give me the excellent Temper of those Saints,
who through Faith subdued Kingdoms,
brought Righteousness, obtained Promises,
stopped the Mouths of Lions, quenched the Vi-
olence of the Fire, out of Weakness were made
strong, and were tortured, not accepting
Deliverance, that they might obtain a better
Resurrection. O deny me not the same Spi-
rit

rit of Faith, that at last I may obtain the End of my Faith, the Salvation of my Soul, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

IX. *Exercise.*

To put a charitable Interpretation upon what we see or hear, especially when the Thing we see, or hear, doth look ill; an Exercise commanded. 1 Cor. 13. 4, 5, 6, 7. Rom. 14. 13. Matth. 7. 1, 2, 3. An Exercise very necessary in this Age, we live in, where Mens preposterous Judgments and Misconstructions of one anothers Actions, have made them Strangers to that Charity, which thinks no Evil; and the Duties of the Second Table are as much neglected, as if Men had never heard of them; wherein Mens Passions have shaken off the Empire of Reason, and will be shackled by no Laws of God or Religion; wherein Men will be Judges of other Mens Hearts, and think God hath given them free leave to pass their Censures on all those that come within the Verge of their Knowledge. This Exercise includes five Duties.

- 1. Unwillingness to believe any thing that's ill of our Fellow Christians.*
- 2. Believing and Hoping that it was not done with any ill Intention.*
- 3. Ascribing the evil Act, either to Education, or Ignorance, or the Society they have been in, or to Necessity, or to some other Circumstances, which may take off from*

the Greatness of the Guilt. 4. Pitying of them.
5. Believing readily all the good we hear of
our Neighbours.

1. Unwillingness to believe any Thing
that's ill of our Fellow Christians. A quick
Belief of Things of this Nature, argues either
Malice, or great Vanity of Mind. The best
Man that is cannot escape the Lashes of a slan-
derous Tongue; and there are Thousands,
that will raise ill Reports of their Neighbours,
without any other Ground, but an Humour:
We see daily how we are deceiv'd, by giving
Credit to uncertain Rumours; and shall I be-
lieve any Thing that's ill of my Neighbour,
because two or three Men say so? Nay,
though a Man of Credit and Honesty accuses
him, my Belief at the best must be but slow
and wavering. If wavering and doubting
be allowable in any Sort of Faith, it is in
this; and *sure it cannot be so bad*, must be
our Language in these Cases; *There may be
a Mistake in it; how is it possible he could
be so forsaken of his Reason? It is improba-
ble he would plunge himself into so dangerous
a Gulph. Let the Thing be better examin'd
first, before we give the Verdict: Let's not
be peremptory in our Judgment, till we have
heard him plead in his own Defence; Till
then, let us suspend our Thoughts, and
think better of his Actions.* Thus we
ought to qualify the ill we hear of our
Neighbours; and he that thus exercises his

Discretion, and his Reason, acts like a rational Man, upon Principles of Prudence, and Christian Circumspection.

Chrysoft.
Homil. in
c. 18. Gen.

It is well observ'd by St. *Chrysoftom* upon the 18th Chapter of *Genesis*, That God's Speech, *vers. 21.* at the first Blush, seems very strange: *I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the Cry of it, which is come unto me:* But by this saying, the Almighty suggests to us an excellent Lesson, which is not to condemn Men upon hear-say, not to be facile and easy in believing what is said to our Neighbours Dishonour and Disparagement: And though I grant, that sometimes by this unwillingness to believe, we may run into Danger, as the Noble *Gedaliah*, *Jer. 40. 16. Jer. 41. 2.* who would not give Credit to the Man that told him of the barbarous Design of *Ishmael*; yet he that values the Favour of God, more than the Applause of Men; and had rather obey the Precepts of his God, than be guided by the Rules the World follows; and prefers a Share in the Happiness of another World, before a Portion in the Pleasures and Satisfaction of this present; will rather run these Hazards, than be guilty of Uncharitableness; and he that cannot suffer for a Precept of Christ, is not fit to be his Disciple, *Mark 8. 34, 35.* A Man's suffering for a Virtue, doth not therefore make the Virtue less amiable; else we must

con-

condemn all that Holiness, for which the
ancient Christians endured Persecution. Nor
is the Inference tolerable, that God there-
fore suffer'd *Gedaliah* to be slain, because he
would believe nothing, that was ill, of *Isb-*
mael; but the Instance is rather mention'd,
as an Example of Heroick Vertue, that *Ge-*
daliah would rather die, than break the
Law of Charity.

2. Believing, and Hoping, that the ill our
Neighbour is found to have done, was not
done with an ill Intention: This is another
Branch of this Charitable Interpretation of
our Neighbours Actions; without all per-
adventure, the Intention either aggravates,
or qualifies a Crime. He that hurts his
Neighbour with an Intent to be revenged
upon him, certainly is a greater Sinner;
than he that hurts him only to save himself;
He that tells a Passage of me, which ren-
ders me ridiculous to the Company that's
present, may not do it with an Intent to
traduce me, but it may drop from him out

of Inconsiderateness. *Naaman*, the *Syrian*,^{2 Reg. 5.}
did indeed bow himself, when his Master
lean'd on him in the House of *Rimmon*;<sup>Tollenda
ex animo
suspicio, &
conjectura.</sup>
but he, that from thence should have con-
cluded, that he did it with an Intent to a-<sup>Ille me pa-
rum hu-
manè sa-</sup>

lutavit, ille osculo meo non adhaesit, ille inchoatum Sermonem cito abrupit, il-
le ad cœnam non vocavit, illius vultus aversior visus est. Non deerit suspici-
oni argumentatio, simplicitate opus est, & benignâ Rerum aestimatione. Ni-
hil nisi, quod in oculos occurret, manifestumque erit credamus, &c. Senec.
de ira lib. 2. c. 24.

dore and honour the *Syrian* God, or *Devil* rather, would have done the Man wrong, his Intent being only to perform his Duty to his Prince, while he hated the Idol in his Heart. As it is in Religious Actions, a Man may either pray as the *Pharisee*, with a Design of being applauded by the Standers by, or with an humble Sense of his Wants, as the *Publican*, and their different Intentions may cause very great Alteration in the Acceptance of their Devotions: So in evil Actions, the Intent gives the Sin the Dye; and according to that, it is either Colour black, or chequer'd with Spots of White. This made God appoint different Proceedings for him, that had kill'd his Neighbour premedately, or wilfully, and him that without Design, chanc'd to be the Cause of his Death, *Numb.* 35. 11, 30.

Indeed some Actions are so foul, that the Offender cannot with any Colour of Reason be supposed to have had a good Intention in it; but where there is one that is good, there are ten others, which are capable of a double Intention; and since we cannot look into Mens Hearts, nor search into the Recesses of their Minds; it is our safest Course to exercise our Charity, as to their Intent, that it might be more plausible than it seems, or is said to be; and this is the Import of Christ's Command, *John* 7. 24. *Judge not according to outward Appearance* upon

Augustin
Serm. de
temp.

upon which Words St. *Augustin*, or who-ever be the Author of that Tract, comments thus: *Open and Notorious Crimes may, and must be judged, and severely censured; but those that come not within the Sphere of our certain Knowledge, whether they be done with a bad or good Intent, we may not, and must not judge.* Where the Action is capable of a good Intention, let's ever give our Vote for that: For suppose we err, it is an Error of the right Hand; and it is more prudent and Christian like, to believe a bad Man to be good, than bring ourselves to a Habit of Censuring, and consequently, to run ourselves into Danger of mis-interpreting the harmless Acts even of the best of Men.

3. *Ascribing the evil Act, either to Education, or to Ignorance, or to the Society, our Neighbour converses with, or to Necessity, or to some other Circumstances, which may take off from the Greatness of the Guilt.* I have read of a *Persian* King, who having condemn'd a Prisoner to Death, and given the Executioner a Sign to do his Office; the Prisoner despairing of all Hopes of Mercy, in his own Language began to revile the King, and curse him: The King demanding what it was the Wretch did mutter; a grave and charitable Man, that stood by, answered, This unhappy Creature was saying, that Paradise awaits those that shew Mercy; and none can so much reckon upon the Happi-

Musladin
Saadi Shiras
Rasaf.
p. m. 23.

ness of another World, as those that moderate their Anger, and give Laws to their Fury. The King hearing this, immediately revoked the Sentence, and bid him live. Another Courtier that bore a Spleen to this sober Man, presently steps forth, and assures the King, that the Prisoner had been so far from answering modestly, that he had most basely reviled him for condemning him, and that this Man had misrepresented the Malefactor's Answer. The King hereupon fell into a Passion, and protested, I like this Man's Lye better than thy Truth, for he hath covered the Malefactor's ill Nature with the Mantle of Charity, but thou speakest nothing but Spleen and Malice!

Though I do not altogether like this Way of doing good Turns, yet as to the main, the Action was Heroick and Magnanimous; and would Men, as the Philosopher advised them, put the Bag, wherein their own Faults are, before, and that wherein their Neighbour's Offences are, behind; there is no Question, but they would observe the Rules I have laid down. I am sure, he that means to work in God's Vineyard, like a Christian, must do so. Breeding, Education, and Society, and other Circumstances, do make great Alterations upon Mens Tempers and Inclinations; and if these Causes be rightly considered and weighed, the Injuries we receive,

ive, or fancy, will not appear so big, as
flesh, and Blood does represent them.

This made *Epicurus* take no great Notice
of Affronts and Wrongs that were offer'd
him, saying, That the Men that did so,
acted according to their Nature, as Winds
and Heat, and Ice, and Frost do, and he
could be angry with them no more than he
would chide the Wind for blowing off his
Cap, or blame the Sun for making him
sweat, or Drink. It takes off from the hei-
ousness of the evil Act, if we think it is
not Inclination, but some adventitious Heat,
that hath caused the Injury. Such a Man
approaches me; it's possible he may not
know me; if he did, he would not give
himself that Freedom. Another takes me to
be a Drunkard, it's possible, those that hate
me, told him so, and to confirm him in his
Belief, swore to it; such a Servant robs me,
may be the ill Society he kept hath brought
him to it; another is unfaithful to me, may
be Poverty prevailed with him to be so;
such a one calls me Hypocrite for my Zeal,
may be some ill Principles have been instil-
led into him; Another seeks to do me Mis-
chief, may be he is put on by those that
have no other way to shew their Spleen a-
gainst me; may be, it was Misinformation
that made this Man despise me; may be, it
was his being in such a Family made him
neglect my Counsel; may be, it was the
power-

Diog. La-
er. lib. 10.
& Gassend.
comment.

Cogita
eum in se
non esse,
qui vitupe-
rat, & non
molestè fe-
res contu-
melias
ejus, nam
& demo-
niaci ple-
rumque,
nos verbe-
rant, nec
solum non
movemur,
verum eti-
am eos de-
stemus.
Chrysost.

powerful Charm of Self-Interest that may hinder this Man of such a Preferment may be, he had other Apprehensions of the Act than I, and that made him contradict me. What-ever is possible in these Cases may justly be believed, and that's it, which the Apostle means by saying, that *Charity believes all Things*, 1 Cor. 13. 7.

Indeed, to shift off mine own Sins in this manner, and to put such favourable Interpretations upon them, would be Delusion and Self-Flattery, a great Sin, and of very dangerous Consequence, for that would be the way to poison the Wound which I should cure; but in my Neighbour's Concerns, to ascribe the Injury to any Thing, rather than his Temper or Inclination, and malicious Designs, is a Virtue and Duty great and excellent, and a Gift, beyond that of Miracles 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3.

4. *Pitying our Fellow-Christians upon the Account of their Faults, and Errors.* Thus St. Paul pitied the *Jews* his Country-men who had studied to murder him, Rom. 9. 3. Thus St. *Austin* pitied the *Donatists* who did what they could to fally his Fame and to wrong his Reputation. We pity Men that are sick, and such as have not the use of their Reason, or that have lost their Estate, and Fortune, or are fallen into the Hands of a powerful Enemy; and shall not we pity the Man, who by his Errour, and Offence

ence, is fallen sick of a desperate Disease, which if not speedily remedied, will make him languish and die into eternal Torments? Shall not we pity the Wretch who hath acted below the Dignity, and Power of a rational Creature, unmann'd himself, and lost his Reason in his sinful Enterprize? Shall not we pity a Creature, that by his Sin hath lost the Favour of God, and his Sense of God's Omnipresence, and Omniscience, and weakened, if not lost his Title to the Treasures Christ hath purchas'd by his Death and Passion? Shall not we pity him that hath lost his Way, and is fallen among the thieves of Hell, become a Subject of the Prince of Darkness, and hath brought himself into a worse Condition than ever the Israelites were brought to, under the Tyranny of *Pharaoh*? Certainly such a Man deserves our Pity more than our Anger, our Commiseration more than our Passion, and our Tears more than our Stripes. The Injury he hath done us, is not so great as that he hath done to himself, and he is to be pitied the more, because, may be, he doth not pity himself; we are not only to weep with them that weep, but to weep over those too, that have cause to mourn for themselves, and are blinded, and do not, for that's the greater Misery; He that is sensible of his Misery, and weeps, may yet find out a way to be freed from it;

†

but

but he that is not, and consequently is not affected with it, runs on, and locks up at the Gates of Mercy, and Recovery against himself; whence must necessarily arise those everlasting Plagues, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

5. *A ready Belief of all the good that is said of our Neighbours.* Indeed, this is a Sign of a generous Mind, of a Soul enamour'd with Goodness, and so in love with it, that it would have no Man bad, but is desirous that all Mankind should meet in this Centre. A sanctified Soul doth attentively listen to such Reports, rejoyces at the Blessing God hath conferred upon it's Neighbour, and if the good Things said of him be not true, it however wishes they were so. Such a Man hopes that the very Shadows of his Neighbour's Graces, are substantial Things, and though he would not, if he could help it, suffer Sin upon him, or sooth him into counterfeit Piety; yet till he hath certain Knowledge to the contrary, he believes he is that Man he seems, and is reported to be. A true Christian hath a Soul greedy after Goodness, and is glad of an Opportunity to think well of his Neighbour. That which makes him loth to believe any ill of him, makes him believe all that is said in his Commendation, for he abhors that which is Evil; Sin is odious to him, because God hates it, and therefore he would have no

Man

is no an guilty of it ; and because Goodness is
up a exceeding lovely and amiable in his Eyes,
again d God loves it, therefore he would have
e tho Men love Goodness, that God may love
Dev em, and that draws this charitable Belief
om his Mind ; he believes what he would
ve to be true, and so makes good that Cha-
bat rcter St. *Paul* gives of Charity, that it
a Sig nks no Evil, but rejoices in the Truth,
d wit Cor. 13. 4, 5.

And this is that Exercise that is incum-
ent upon you, *Men, Fathers, and Brethren*,
a Exercise of that Necessity, that you must
Go declare Enmity and War against that Law
nd of Nature, *Whatsoever you would that Men*
ue, *do unto you, even so do ye to them*, if
Ma you neglect, or undervalue it. Is there any
eigh of you that would not be thus dealt with-
and ? Would not you have others put such
lp in Charitable Interpretations on your Words
coun and Actions, and will not you express the
now same Civility to others ? Would you have o-
tha ners subject to this Rule, and would you
A except yourselves ? Would you have others
afte ve up to this Light, and would you love
y to Darknes better ? Would you have others
hich discharge their Duty to you, and would
him you be excused from discharging yours to
h them ? What can be more unreasonable,
h is where is your Justice, your Equity, your
Go Religion ? Would you have others wash
e no your Errours white, and would you throw
Ma Ink

Matth. 7.
12.

Ink on theirs ? Would you have other smooth the rough out-side of your Offices, and put on them the Skins of Lambs, and would you put the Lions Skin on theirs ? It is Ill-Manners, as well as Irreligion, and do not your Hearts and Consciences smite you for it ?

You are for Peace and Quietness, but are your sinister Constructions of your Neighbours Actions the way to it ? Charitable Interpretations will preserve you from Storm, but where you abate nothing of the Fault, your Passions must needs rise into Tempest. Calmness of Mind is so great a Blessing, that a wise Man would purchase it at any Price, and when you may have it at so cheap a Rate, as the favourable Interpretations of what your Neighbours say or do, will ye stand out and refuse the Treasure ?

This Exercise will preserve you from a thousand Sins, and as many Inconveniencies too. We see, how Men, when once they give way to uncharitable Censures, how they run from one Sin to another, and know not where to stop ? This Uncharitableness leads them on to Envy, Envy to Wrath, Wrath to Backbiting, Backbiting to Revenge, Revenge stops their Progress in Goodness, and who can reckon up all the Evils that flow from this polluted Spring ? These Evils you avoid by your favourable Interpretations.

*Deus altissimus scelerum aspicit & tegit vici-
nus vero nihil videt & tamen nil nisi alienos nos crepat.*
Saadi. Gulistan. p. 263.

and consequently lessen your Account
with God; so much you strike off from the
sum of your Sins, and consequently, are
more expedite in your way to Heaven.
What should you do but imitate your Fa-
ther, which is above? How loth is he to
believe our Rebellion against him? *Truly*
they are my People, saith he, *Children that*
will not lye, so he became their Saviour,
Isaiah, 63, 8. *He knows our Frame, and re-*
mbers that we are but Dust, saith the
royal Prophet, *Psal. 103. 14.* And *shouldst*
thou also have Compassion on thy Fellow-
servant, even as I had pity on thee? Saith
the Son of God, *Matth. 18. 33.* Shall God
allow Grains in Offences, and shall not we?
shall he remember we are Dust, and shall
he forget, that our Neighbours are so, and
subject to Mistakes and Errours? How can we
expect, God will deal favourably with us, if
we do not deal so with our Fellow-Christi-
ans? What do we call ourselves Christians
if we will not learn to run in this Race?
This Charitable Interpretation of what we see,
if we hear, is the very Character which is to di-
stinguish us from Jews, Heathens, and Infidels;
if we want this Mark, how shall Christ
distinguish us from the Goats?
Who hath made you Judges of your
Neighbours? Who opened a Window to
show you into their Hearts? Why do you usurp
God's Authority? Hath he appointed a
Day

Day to Judge the World in, and will you prevent that Judgment? Are you ever like to love your Neighbours as yourselves while you reject this Exercise? And if you are resolved not to learn it, how will you be able to appear at the great Tribunal? Have you forgot that this Charity is the Root of all Virtues? Have not you heard, that this makes the Soul beautiful, and lovely in the Eyes of him, that gave it? Have you forgot, that this is the Bond that unites the Soul to its Creator? This is the Harp which cheers the Heart both of God and Man: This opens the Gate of Heaven. This is the Gold of the Sanctuary, without which, we are naked, poor, and miserable. This enlarges the Soul, whereas Suspicion, and rash Judgment doth contract it. This is the most excellent gift, and speaking in divers Languages, and giving our Bodies to be burnt, and the greatest Learning in the World. The Eloquence of Angels, the Rhetorick of the greatest Orators, the greatest Accomplishments fall short of its Glory; and he that hath it, offers a more acceptable Sacrifice to God, than he that kills the Cattle upon a thousand Hills and lays them upon his Altar: This is the Livery of the Citizens of Heaven, and that which makes Saints and Angels so happy is their perfect Charity. Our love to God is nothing but froth, and smoak without it

and

and he'll never believe that we prize his Favour, while we are loth to venture on a Duty he is so much in love with. This makes Man, a living Man; without this, Religious Societies are no better than Hells, as *Jerome* phrases it, and the Inhabitants of Convents, no better than Devils. Put on sackcloth, tear your Flesh, fast yourselves to death, lie on the hard Ground, walk in sack, pray whole Days together, without Charity you are not yet arrived to the Perfection of Apostolical Holiness.

Hieron. in Regul. Monach. ad Paul. & Eustoch. c. 9.

The Prayer.

O God, who art infinitely Compassionate, Charitable! Love itself! and Goodness itself! Ah how selfish is my Heart! To whom shall I complain, but to thee, who alone canst heal me! Thou hast Balm, thou hast Plaisters for all Sores, Medicines for all Diseases. Thy Store-house is full of Blessings. How uncharitable are my Thoughts sometimes! How censorious my Tongue! How am I to think and speak ill of my Neighbour! How doth my Blood boil with revengeful Desires, when either a real or an imaginary Injury is offered me! O thou God of Peace, O Father of Mercy! melt, melt this stubborn Heart; how loth is it to yield to thy Conjunctions! I am encompassed with all the Rays of God's Charity, imaginable. Thou bearest

*bearest with me, when I deserve Punishment
 thou dealest not with me after my Sins, nei-
 ther rewardest me after mine Iniquities. E-
 ven my best Actions thou mightest justly except
 against; but thy Charity covers a Multitude
 of Faults. How often do I provoke thee, and
 yet thou shootest not thine Arrows at me.
 I transgress thy Laws, I affront thee, I am a
 unprofitable Servant, yet thou pitiest me
 and dost not suffer thy Displeasure to arise
 against me. In the midst of my Follies thou
 art kind, not that thou approvest of them
 but that thou wouldest lead me to Repentance.
 O let me think of this, and let me love my
 Neighbour with a pure Heart fervently
 spread thy Wings over me. Form in me Bo-
 els of Mercy. Come Charity, thou lovely
 Grace. Come into my Garden, my Spouse,
 my Beloved! O thou Celestial Husbandman
 plant this wholesome Herb in my barren
 Ground. Pull up the Weeds that grow there
 Banish from me all Sourness of Spirit: Let
 all Bitterness and Wrath die in me. Let
 Malice flee away from my Soul. Rid me
 that ill Nature which lodges in me. Let
 Gentleness and Meekness be the welcome Guests
 in my Heart. Make me peaceable and tract-
 able, easy to be entreated, full of good Works
 ready to forgive. Let the Charity of the
 Lord Jesus be my Guide, and let me truly
 follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes.
 Jesu! Can I ascribe thy Charity to my Soul, but
 unkindly*

unkind to others! Can I be churlish, morose,
and ill-natur'd, when I remember how thou
diedst for thy Enemies! I believe thou inter-
cedest for me in Heaven! what favourable
Constructions must I suppose are put upon my
Actions in that Intercession! When Satan
accuses me in the Presence of God, and hath
but too much Reason for those Accusations,
thou pleadest thy Merits, thy Wounds, and
thy Father's Love. Where my Infirmities
will bear Excuses, thou qualifiest them, and
suffereſt not the Enemy to have his Will of me.
O let thy great Example be ever before me,
and when I would forget it, represent it in
lively Colours to my Mind, that I may be thy
Disciple indeed; and having lived in Love
and Charity here, may at last arrive in the
Paradise of everlasting Love. Amen.

X. Exercise.

Conscientiously, and Faithfully to discharge
the Duties of our several Relations, Cal-
lings, and Conditions; an Exercise enjoyn'd
Ephes. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9. Col. 3. 18, 19, 20,
21, 22. Col. 4. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 17, 18. Tit. 2.
2, 3, 4, 6, 9. Heb. 13. 17. 1 Tim. 3. 2, 3, 9,
12. Rom. 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Let a Chri-
tian work never so hard, if he make not this
conscientious Discharge part of his Work, he
works as those, that built the Tower of Ba-
bel to no purpose, rolls *Sisyphus's* Stone, and

*Vid. Agri-
col. de Me-
like tall.*

like Subterraneous Spirits, that are to be seen in Mines, with great Labour, and Industry, does nothing. What I mean by several Relations, Callings, and Conditions, no Man can be ignorant of, that hath heard of such Names, as Father, and Mother, Parents, and Children, Masters, and Servants, Husbands, and Wives, Tutors, and Scholars, Magistrates, and Subjects, Ministers, and People, Rich, and Poor, Old Men, and Young Men, Bond, and Free, Noble, and Ignoble, Tradesmen, and Gentlemen. If the Exercise commanded in the Text be universal, then certainly all these have their Task, all these are bound to exercise themselves in Duties, belonging to the Relation, or Condition they are in. And,

1. How do I exercise myself unto Godliness, as a Father, or Mother of Children, except I shew them a good Example, except I behave myself decently, gravely, soberly, and modestly before them, that they may learn nothing, that's ill, by my Carriage? Except I breed them up in the Fear of God, talk to them of the Odiousness of Sin, and Beauty of Holiness; instruct them in the Ways of God, and pray with them, and for them; except I provide for them, not only for their Bodies but their Souls too; except I admonish them in the Lord, check them for their Sins, reprove them for their Faults, and correct them early for any undecent Action, or Expression

Deut. 6. 7,
8.

Prov. 23.
13, 14.

on; except I oblige them to use Reverence Prov. 21.6.
and Respect to their Father that begot them;
and their Mother that bore them; except I
instill conscientious Principles into them,
Principles of Justice, Honesty, Goodness,
Meekness, Patience, and giving every one
their Due; except I enquire into their Devo-
tion, whether, and how they read, and pray
and hear; except I watch their Actions, their
Eating and Drinking, Sleep, Working, Wri-
ting, Studying, Playing, and see whether
they keep within Bounds, or no; except I ex-
amine them, what Progress they make in Pie-
ty, whether they make Conscience of Secret
Duties, whether they are respectful, and obe-
dient to the Ministers of the Word of God, Ephes. 6.¹
whether they be attentive in hearing Sermons, 4
whether they delight in keeping the Lord's
Day holy, and what Apprehensions they have
of their Spiritual, and Eternal Condition,
how they spend their Time, and whether they
apply themselves to those Virtues they read
and hear of; whether they do not indulge them-
selves in Pride, or Lying, or Envy, or Ha-
tred, or revengeful Desires, whether they are
tractable, and live up to the Rules, and Pre-
cepts, I give them.

2. Then I exercise myself unto Godli-
ness; as a Child, as a Son, or Daughter,
when I follow the good Instructions of my Ephes. 6.
Parents, when I obey them in every lawful 1, 2, 3.
Thing, when I have an honest desire to please
them,

- them, and a filial Fear of their Displeasure, when I do not lose my Respect to them, though I am got out of their Jurisdiction, nor deride them for their Infirmities, but
- Gen. 9. 23. like the Sons of *Noah*, cover their Nakedness with the Cloak of Charity; when I speak of them, and to them with Reverence, when I take their Admonition, and Correction kindly, when I seek to promote their
- Deut. 21. 48. Honour, Credit, and Reputation; when I attend to their good Counsels, and am guided by their Discretion and Wisdom, and good Example; when I imitate them in their
- Prov. 23. 22. Seriousness, and hearken to their Instructions, and do not forsake their Law; when I neither marry, nor settle myself in the World without their Advice, and am govern'd by their Direction more, than by mine own Determination; when I express my grateful
- Gen. 24. 3. Resentment of their Kindnesses, and study how I may requite their Paternal Care and Love, when I interpret all they do or say candidly, when I respect them, though they are Poor, and bear the same Love to them if they be sunk into a low Condition, that I would have done, if they had been advanced to the highest pitch of Prosperity? when I relieve them in their Distress, support them in their Want, and like *Aeneas*, carry them out 'upon my Shoulders, to save
- Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 7. them from Fire, and Danger; when like that happy Daughter in *Pliny*, I feed them with mine

mine own Blood; and like the Children of
Catania of old, rather endanger myself, than
 see them perish; when in their unlawful
 Commands I shew passive Obedience, and
 where I cannot obey them for Conscience
 sake, suffer their Anger, and the Effects of
 it patiently without traducing, or exposing
 them to the Scorn, and Laughter of Men;
 when like the *Rechabites*, I obey them in
 Things lawful, yet difficult, and suffer not
 the Uneasiness, or Hardness of the Task, to
 discourage me from acting according to their
 Prescriptions.

Jer. 35. 8.
9.

3. How can that Man be said to exercise
 himself unto Godliness, as a Master of a Fa-
 mily, that is himself a Slave to Sin, and
 to the Devil, that either drinks or swears, or
 cheats, or lyes, and instead of discourag-
 ing his Servants from any of these Sins, doth
 rather tempt, and entice them to these Trans-
 gressions? That is regardless of his great
 Master in Heaven, to whom e'er long he
 must give an Account of his Stewardship.
 That is indifferent, what becomes of his
 Servants Souls, and is not much concern'd,
 whether they are ever like to get to Heaven,
 so they do not cheat, or wrong him in his
 Goods, or Possessions. That makes nothing
 of God's Commands, and lives, as if the
 Precepts of the Lord Jesus did not belong
 to him. That gives himself to Laziness, and
 Idleness, and thereby teaches his Servants to

Psal. 101,
2, 3, 4, 5,
6, 7.

Acts 16.
53.

Josh. 24.
15.

Deut. 24.
14, 15.

do so too. That makes no Conscience of redeeming the Time, and while he should work, and be busy at his Calling, sits in an Alehouse, or Tavern, or runs into ill Company. That cares not, what Qualifications his Servants have, so they will but do his Work; and is not at all displeased, if they privily slander their Neighbours, or turn aside from the Holy Commandment deliver'd unto them. That either oppresses his Servant with Work, and Drudgery, or gives him leave to waste much time in doing nothing. That allows his Servants no Time to perform their Duty to their Maker, nor encourages them to Prayer by his Example and Command. That gives them Liberty to do what they please on the Lord's Day, and is unconcern'd, if they neglect the publick Worship of God, or their private Devotion. That takes no Notice of their Thrivings in Grace, and cares not what he doth in their Presence, so his Passion, and Humour be but gratified: That gives them bitter Language, and instead of reproving them with Meekness and Gentleness for their Sins, and Faults, reviles them with all possible Wrath and Bitterness: That doth not give them Things necessary, and convenient for their Sustenance, and denies them the Wages for which they serve him: That doth not faithfully instruct his Covenant-Servant in the Art, or Trade, he hath promised

isfied to instruct him in, and hath no Tender- Col. 4. 1.
ness, no Compassion to such Persons in their
Distress, and Sicknes: That thinks much of
giving them Bread, when they cannot
work, and maintaining them, when Provi-
dence hath disabled them from doing their
Masters Business.

4. If I will exercise myself unto Godli-
ness, as a Servant, I must be diligent and
faithful, industrious and careful in the Work
I am imploy'd in; I must advance my Ma-
ster's Interest, and manage his Concerns in
his Absence with the same Honesty, that I
would do, if he were present; I must cheer-
fully run at his Command, if not contrary
to the Will of God, and be ready to do the
Errand, he sends me upon. I must not pick
and chuse my Work, but do that, which he
thinks most fit, and convenient for me. I
must not grumble at his Order, nor be un-
willing to go where he sends me. I must
love him, as well as serve him, and ho-
nour the Froward, as well as the Gentle: I
must suffer none of his Goods to be embe-
vell'd, nor waste the Treasure, he hath com-
mitted to my Charge: I must not steal from
him, what I think he doth not know of, nor
enrich myself by what he hath, farther
than he gives me Leave and Liberty. I must
not mispend the Hours, he gives me for my
Work, nor dissemble with him in Things,
that make for his just Interest and Advan-
tage.

Matt. 8. 9.

1 Tim. 6. 1.

- 1 Pet. 2. 18. tage. I must be tender of his Honour, and the Secrets of the House, I am acquainted withal, I must not reveal to Strangers. I must not discover his Faults, without a lawful Call, nor tell Stories, to the Men that hate him, of his Actions. I must not consort with idle Companions, nor let Persons come into his House, that would either wrong him, or do him Mischief. I must stand up in his Vindication, when he is abused, and take heed of exaggerating his Errours, if once they come to be publick. I must not tell him a Lye, if I have committed a Fault, and am ask'd about it, nor stand to justify, or excuse my Errour, when I will not bear an Apology. I must not answer again, when I am chid by him, unless repay him with ill Language, if his Passion prompts him to speak more than otherwise he would have done. I must bear with his Infirmities, and though he hath his failings, yet do him Service with Fear and Trembling. I must not despise him, because I am better born, nor speak therefore Dishonourably of him, because I understand more than he. I must plead Conscience, when he would have me do a Thing, that's displeasing to God, and humbly beg of him not to put me upon that, which in the end will be a Torment to my Spirit. I must endeavour to gain his Love, and do sometimes more than he commands me to testify
- Tit. 2. 9, 10.
- Jam. 5. 16.
- 2 Sam. 19. 26, 27.
- Gen. 39. 9.
- Ephes. 6. 5, 6, 7, 8.

and deal to do my Duty. I must listen to the
 good Lessons he gives me from the Word of
 God, and exhort my Fellow-Servants to do
 the like. I must be kind to his Children,
 and take care, that by my familiar Conver-
 sation with them, I do not draw them into a-
 ny Thing, that may be prejudicial either to
 their Souls, or Bodies.

5. That Man doth not exercise himself Col. 3. 19.
 to Godliness, as a Husband, that loves ^{20.}
 his Wife without Dissimulation; or doth I Cor. 14.
 not, as much as in him lies, promote her ^{34, 35.}
 spiritual, and everlasting Welfare; that doth
 not care for dwelling with her, nor thinks
 his Duty to entreat the Light of God's
 Countenance for her, or joyn in Prayer
 with her: That is intemperate in his Wed- I Cor. 7.
 lock, or thinks, that the strict Alliance be- ^{11, 12.}
 tween him and her warrants every immo-
 dest, extravagant, and inordinate Pleasure, I Cor. 7;
 and Desire, or that no *Decorum* is to be ob- ^{29.}
 served in that Estate: That hath no care of
 her Health, Wealth, and Credit, or loves
 her more for her Money, and Beauty, than
 her Virtue: That gives her reproachful Lan-
 guage, and reproves her not with Tender-
 ness and Compassion, if her Errours deserve
 Reprehension: That doth not instruct her, Ephes. 5.
 so far as he is able, or doth not help her to ^{25.}
 bear the Burthen of the Family: That is a
 stranger to all pity, and cares not, what be-
 comes of her, so himself can but enjoy
 Health,

Health, and Prosperity; whose Carriage to her is Churlish, and his Expressions to her dipt in Gall, and Vinegar: That exposes her natural Defects before Company, and aggravates her Neglects, which should be qualified with softer Constructions: That instead of comforting her, slights her, and is so far from healing her Wounds, that he doth what he can, to make them wider: That doth not allow her convenient Food, and Raiment, and let's her want those necessary Supplies, which the Law of Nations binds him to: That doth not protect her when she is in Danger, nor redeem her from the Malice and Cruelty of those, that use all Means to disparage her: That doth not trust her with the Affairs of the Family, if she be able to manage them, or conceal from her the Things which appertain to their common Safety: That goes beyond the Bounds of the Authority, God hath given him over her, and instead of being her Head, makes himself a Tyrant, and her a Slave: That doth not yield unto her reasonable Requests, and by his good Example encourage her to Piety, Gravity, Charity, and Discretion: That despises her good Counsel, and will be sooner persuaded by a Stranger, or idle Companion, than by her that lies in his Bosom: That laughs at her Devotion, and takes pains to make her weary of her Seriousness: That takes it ill, if she should

1 Pet. 3. 7.

1 Sam. 30.
18, 19.Matth. 19.
8.

ould obey God more than him, and thinks
 thing so tedious, as her frequent Exhor-
 g of him to universal Conscientiousness.
 ch a Man for certain doth not exercise
 himself unto Godliness, but rather strives
 work himself out of the Obligations of
 and exercises himself unto Hardness of
 heart, and Impenitence.

6. And indeed the same may be said of
 the Woman, that doth not discharge the
 duty of a Wife, if married to a Husband.
 her Religion shall deserve this Name of
 exercising herself unto Godliness, her great
 Care, must be according to the Apostle's Rule,
to reverence her Husband. After him must

Eph. 5.33.

her Desire, it must be her Glory, to sub-
 mit to him in the Fear of God. In her
 Mind she must esteem him, and value him,
 as the Image and Glory of the great Crea-
 tor. To love him must become natural to

Gen. 3.16.

her; and to tend him, though never so
 weak, or calamitous, must be one great part

1 Cor. 11.

of her Care. Her Conversation must be
 chaste, and the value she hath for him must

1 Sam. 18.

appear in her Words and Actions. She must
 fear him, as her Master, and yet nothing

Prov. 31.

must cause that Fear, but Affection. She
 must deny herself for him, and in Things in-

11, 12.

different, his Will must be her Rule to go
 by. Her Submission must be hearty, and it

1 Pet. 3.

must not be any sinister Respect, but Consci-
 ence, that must produce it. She must wave

1, 2.

her

Col. 3.18.

- 2 Sam. 6. her Privileges that Birth and Breeding have
 20, 21, 22. given her, and Honour him according to the
 Law of him that joyned them. Her Study
 must be to make his Life comfortable, and
 she must contrive soft Expressions to engage
 his Inclinations. Her Language to him must
 be mild, and peaceable, and her Behaviour
 such as becomes a Woman, that professeth
 Godliness. Her Conversation must be the
 same in his Absence, that it is in his Presence
 and she must give him such Demonstration
 of her Kindness, that his Heart may confide
 1 Pet. 3, 4. in her. To get a meek and quiet Spirit
 Prov. 21. must not be the least part of her Prayer, and
 19. Insolence and Haughtiness of Spirit she must
 Prov. 21. shun, as the Pestilence. She must be a Stran-
 24. ger to brawling, and her Words must be
 weighed in a Balance. She must flee Idle-
 ness, as an Enemy, and contrive how to ad-
 vance her Husband's Interest with Honesty
 Prov. 31. She must encourage her Servants to their La-
 15, 16, 17. bour, and guide them by her Eye. Her Feet
 19, 20. must not be much in the Streets, and she must
 Prov. 7. 12. remember, it was an Answer fit to be given
 Gen. 18 9. to an Angel, that *Sarah was in her Temper*.
 Her Ears must be open to her Husband's
 Counsel, and she must not think much of his
 Reproof, and Reprehension. The Entertain-
 ment she gives him, must be with a cheerful
 Countenance, and Crossness of Humour must
 be banish'd from her Temper. If ought have
 provoked him, she must study Arts to pacify
 him

him; and whatever revengeful Heat she finds in him, she must study how to allay the Inflammation. His Anger she must overcome by Meekness; and if he be inclined to Passion, take the fittest Opportunities to hush those Tempests. In Expences she must move by his Advice, and the Propriety being properly in him, consult him upon such Occasions. His Kindness to her, must not make her usurp Authority over him; and the more he condescends to her, the more she must oblige him by her Manners.

7. If I mean to exercise myself unto Godliness as a Minister of the Gospel, I must be more concern'd for Mens Souls, than for a Maintenance, and I do little, if I do not study to advance the Peoples Happiness; I must not sow Pillows under their Elbows, nor flatter them with easy Injunctions into Ruin. I must not speak Peace to them, when there is none, nor tell them that they are in God's Favour, when their Averseness from Gospel-Duties shews them Reprobates. I must become an Intercessor for them at the Throne of Grace, and be more than ordinarily Importunate with God, to pour out upon them, the Spirit of Grace, and Supplication. My Life must be Holy, and I must not tell them of one way, and go another; I must let them see, that I am in good Earnest when I preach to them, and that I do not only give them a cast of my Office, when

2 Reg. 14.
8, 9, 10.

1 Tim. 2.
12.

2 Tim. 4. 1.

Ezek. 34.
2, 3, 4

Ezek. 13.
10. 18.

1 Tim. 4.
12.

- when I fright them with Damnation. They must see, that myself am afraid of God's Judgments, and that I have deliberately chosen that Seriousness, which I press upon them, by a thousand Arguments. I must enquire into their Wants, and labour to find my Plaister to their Wounds. I must give them warning, that they fall not into the Snare of the Devil, and if they be caught in it, see which way I may extricate, and free them from that Danger. I must open my Heart and Bosom to them, and convince them, that nothing is so pleasing to me, as an Opportunity to advance their Spiritual Interest. I must be instant in Season, and out of Season, and exhort, and rebuke, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine. The Sins I do reprove in them, I must hate like Poison; and in vain do I bid them abstain from the forbidden Tree, if I stretch forth my Hand to eat of it. I must visit them when they are sick, and must make myself acquainted with their Necessities; I must relieve the Poor, so far as I am able, and by my Zeal and Gentleness, win even upon those that hate me. I must comfort the Weak-hearted, and strengthen the feeble Knees. I must meditate in the Scriptures, and make it my Business to know the Will of God. I must be able to resolve their Doubts, and to confute such as creep in un-awares, to pervert their Souls. I must learn

to rule my own House well, that I may be
able to prescribe good Rules to others; ^{1 Tim. 3.}
and must not neglect the Gift that is in me, ^{3, 4, 5.}
but study how I may lay out myself, for ^{1 Tim. 4.}
the promoting of God's Glory.

8. On the other Side, if I would have my
Conscience bear me witness, that I exercise
myself unto Godliness, as a Hearer, or one
that lives under the Guidance, and Conduct
of the Ministry; I must be sure to obey
them that have the Rule over me, and count
them worthy of double Honour, that la- ^{Heb. 13.}
bour in the Word and Doctrine. I must ^{17.}
look upon them as Ambassadors from God, ^{1 Tim. 5.}
and respect them as Messengers of the Lord ^{2 Cor. 5.}
of Hosts. I must learn to see God in them, ^{20.}
and must look farther than their Outside, ^{2 Cor. 4.}
even to the Commission God hath given ^{5, 6, 7.}
them. I must not despise them, because ^{Acts. 14.}
they carry this Treasure in earthen Vessels, ^{15.}
nor think the worse of them, because they
are Men of the same Passions, that I am.
I must not condemn the whole Function,
because some Wolves do get in among the
Sheep; nor blaspheme the Order, because
there is a *Judas* in the College of *Jesus*.
I must be kind to them for God's Sake, and ^{Matt. 10.}
remember that the Cup of cold Water I ^{43.}
give to them, I give to him that sent them. ^{Matt. 10.}
I must not deny him Maintenance, nor let ^{10.}
them labour without Encouragement. ^{1 Cor. 9.}
I must remember that such Labourers are ^{9, 10, 11.}
^{Acts 2. 27.}
^{1 Cor. 7. 1.}

O

Wor- ^{1 Cor. 8. 1.}

worthy of their Hire, and deserve so much the more, by how much their Pains are of a sublimer Nature. I must consult with them in my Perplexities, and in my Doubts be guided by their Directions. I must have Recourse to them, when I lie under strong Temptations, and reveal my Case to them, that they may know how to apply a Remedy. I must ask seriously of them, what I must do to inherit eternal Life, and when I know it, must run, and make haste to do it. I must consider, that they watch for my Soul, and make that an Argument to express my Love to them upon all Occasions. I must not think any Thing that is bestow'd on them, as thrown away, but believe it will some way or other, descend upon me in richer Showers. I must not shew myself froward, when they do reprove me, nor fall out with them, because they preach no Doctrine, that pleases my sensual Appetite. I must so love them, as to stand up for them when they are traduced, and think it my Duty to speak and act for them, to whom I am more beholding, than to the nearest Relations.

I cannot exercise myself unto Godliness as a Magistrate, except I protect the Innocent, and lash the Guilty into better Manners. I must be a Terrour to Evil-doers, and an Encourager of those that do well. I must reign in Righteousness, and my Rule must

Phil. 4. 10,
14, 17, 19.
Gal. 4. 15,
16.

2 Sam. 24.
3.
Rom. 13.
4.
Psal. 72.
47.

The Best Exercise.

195

in the Fear of God. I must not bear the word in vain, nor must mine Eye spare those, whom God would not have live. I must secure those that are committed to my Care against Dangers, and must not suffer cruel Men to oppress them. I must seek their Welfare, to the best of my Skill and Power, and neglect no lawful Means to advance their Good and Prosperity. I must prescribe them wholesome Laws, and see that they obey the Law of him, who is above all Kings and Princes. I must not stop my Ear against the Cry of the Poor, nor suffer the Widow and Fatherless to be trampled on by their more powerful Neighbours. I must not slay my Subjects, when they are willing to let me have their Fleeces, nor exercise Tyranny over them, when they are willing to submit to the Scepter of my Mercy. I must remember, I have an Account to give to that God that is above me, and that I am as liable to his Rods, and Axes, as the meanest Vassal is to mine. I must not do what I please, but what is convenient, and my Will must not be my Law, but the Will of him, that hath put this Power in my Hands: I must remember that Magistrates are called Gods, and that I can imitate God in nothing so much as in doing good. I must be as Holy as I am Great, and as eminent in Goodness, as I am in Power; I must keep up that Religion, which

1 Kings

12. 6, 7.

Dan. 4.

34, 35, 37.

Psal. 82. 6.

is most agreeable to the Word of God, and must not be ashamed to know the Almighty Precepts. I must proscribe Idolatry, as
 Deut. 17. 18. Thing accursed, and take care, that the Doctrine which is taught within my Dominions, be Sound, and Catholick. I must follow the pious Examples of my Religious Forefathers, and be a nursing Father to the Church, that bred me. I must preserve the Right of all Men, and must especially take heed, that the Land be not defiled with Sacrilege, I must promote Men of Honesty and Virtue to Places of Trust, and must exhort my Subjects in Times of Calamity, to seek the God of their Fathers with Prayer and Fasting. I must not wallow in unlawful Pleasures, but be as much above them as I am above the common Level of Mankind. I must fight more against my intestine Enemies, than against foreign Foes, and look upon the Lusts of my Bosom, as be greater Traytors, than those that would deprive, and rob me of my Purple.

10. If I mean to exercise myself in Godliness as a Subject, I must look upon my Prince, as God's Vicegerent, and stand in Awe of that Authority, the Almighty hath stamp'd upon him. I must not speak Evil of Dignities, nor report Things abroad, which are false to my King's Discredit. I must submit to his Orders, that contradict not the Injunctions of the greater Lawgiver.

Deut. 17.

18.

2 Kings

18.

2 Chron.

17. 3, 4.

2 Chron.

19. 5, 6, 7,

8.

2 Chron.

3. 4.

Psal. 119.

104.

Psal. 139.

21.

Rom. 13.

1, 2, 3.

Joh. 1.

16, 7.

and live peaceably under his Government. I must not sow Sedition among my Neighbours, nor fill them with Prejudice against their lawful Governour: I must suffer rather, than resist, and be persuaded, that those, who resist, shall receive to themselves damnation. I must chearfully give him that Tribute, I owe him, and pay him that respect and Honour, which the Law of God and Nature doth allow him. I must not find Fault with his Judicial Proceedings, because they cross my Interest; nor therefore refuse Obedience, because he doth not think fit to do what I have a Mind to. I must not be subject only for Wrath, but for Conscience Sake; and it must not be Fear of Punishment, but Love to God, and Obedience to his Precepts, must make me Tractable. When he punishes me justly, I must not rail at him; and when unjustly, I must patiently bear it. I must not fight against him, though he oppresses me; and if the Injury he doth me, be never so great, I must use no other Arms, but Tears, and prayers. Though his Yoke be heavy, I must patiently bear it, and leave all Vengeance to that God, that hath said, *I will repay*. I must pray for him, though he wrong me; and beg hard of God to give him the Spirit of Wisdom, and Government, though he trample upon me at his Pleasure. I must not rashly censure his Actions, because I do

1 Sam. 26.

9, 10.

Rom. 13;

7.

Rom. 12.

19.

Psal. 21.

1, 2, 3, 4.

not apprehend the Reason of them; and for
 1 Kings 1. bear judging of them, till I know the Cause
 23. that moved him. I must not only have
 due Veneration for him in my Heart, but
 must express it in my Gestures too; and my
 outward Behaviour to him must shew, that
 2 Sam. 14. I look upon him, as a *Mortal God*. If
 17. falls in any scandalous Sins, I must not
 Psalm 82. tempt to reform him by Insurrection, but
 6. must address myself to that God, in whose
 2 Sam. 12. Hands the Hearts of Princes are, and leave
 1, 2, 3. it to his Power and Goodness, to make him
 a Man after his own Heart.

11. If I mean to exercise myself in
 Godliness, as a Judge, my Tribunal must
 be as sacred, as God's Temple, and as
 Refuge to the Oppressed, as much, as the
 Horns of the Altar. I must be impartial
 2 Chron. 19. 6. in my Sentence, and dread Injustice, as much
 Isai. 1. 17. as I would do the Arch-Angels Trumpet.
 Exod. 18. 21. I must be blind to Bribes, and hate Covetous-
 ness, as I do the Scorpions Sting. I must
 love Truth beyond all the Riches of the
 East, and Falshood must be a Name, as
 odious to me, as that of *Beelzebub*. I must
 mingle Pity with my Threatnings, and Mer-
 cy, and Justice must ever kiss each other
 in my Breast. I must lay aside Passion and Pre-
 judice, and hear Men with that Calmness
 that I would use to say my Prayers. Per-
 jury, I must punish, as the Bane of human
 Society, and Faithfulness must receive

†

Applaud

applause, and highest Commendations. I
must not be swayed by Power in my Justice, John 19.
12. 13.
nor must great Men by their Authority com-
mand my Conscience. I must do right to
the Poor, as well as to the Rich, and be so
much a Christian, as to be no Respector of
Persons. I must not rejoyce at the Destru-
ction of him that hates me, nor laugh at
the Punishment, that falls on the Man, that
hath done me Evil. I must not judge in Fa-
vour of my Relation, because he is so;
nor must I acknowledge any other Kindred
upon the Bench, but such, as are ally'd to
Righteousness. I must not delay a Cause, Exod. 18.
13.
1 Kings 3.
27.
when I may dispatch it; nor make my Neigh-
bour spend Time in Attendance, when it lies
in my Power to tell him, what he is to
trust to. I must attend to the Cause that
comes before me, and turn the other Ear to
the Party that is accused. I must not encou-
rage quarrelling, nor suggest Arguments,
which may feed the Fire of Contention. I Acts 25.
16.
must not be at once, an Accuser and a Judge,
nor carry myself proudly, no, not against
an Enemy. I must study Piety as well as
Justice; and remember that he cannot be a
good Judge, that is an ill Man; and though
Authority and Fear of being turned out, Psal. 72. 2.
Acts 24.
26.
may keep him in Awe for some Time; yet
when-ever he can promise himself Impuni-
ty, or secure himself against the Eyes of
Men, he'll make bold to pervert Judg-
ment, Prov. 31.
4. 5.

ment, and sacrifice all to his own Interest.

Acts 24. 1,
2, 9, 10,
13.

12. He that will exercise himself unto Godliness, as a Client, must bear no Wrath no Malice to the Man that goes to Law with him; must use no unlawful Means to compass his Design, nor think by Flattery or Gifts, to incline the Judge's Favour. He must commit himself to him that judges

Acts 25.
11.

righteously, and with Patience, and Humility, receive the Sentence of him, to whom Authority hath left the Determination. He must not vaunt himself, if he gets the better of him, that opposed him; nor there-

Matth. 5.
39, 40.

fore undervalue his Neighbour, because the Lot is fallen to him in pleasant Places. He must learn to behave himself peaceably for the Future, and so order his Conversation that he may not give Offence to any. He must avoid Litigiousness, as the great Enemy of Christianity, and where Differences may be composed at an easier Rate, shun going to Law, as much as a Patient dreads cutting off his Hand, or Arm, till meer Necessity forces him.

1 Cor. 6.

1, 2, 5, 6,
7.

13. The same may be said of School-Masters and Scholars; The Master doth not exercise himself unto Godliness, that doth not train up the Child under his Charge, in the way he is to go: That doth not season his Mind with a Form of sound Words; and whilst he infuses Learning into him, neglects

2 Tim. 1.
13.

1 Tim. 6.

Inte- glects to teach him how to behave him-
f to God, and to his Neighbour: That
f unto ckers the young Man in his Folly, or lets
Vrath m walk in the way of his Heart: That
Law th not break the stubborn Youth by Ad-
ns to monition, and just Correction, and cares
attery ot what becomes of him, so himself doth
He t get a Livelyhood: That doth not check
udge e first Beginnings of Sin in him, or lets
Humi e Tares run on, till they choak the good
whom ed that's sown there: That doth not teach
He m to stand in Awe of his Maker, or doth
bet ot by his serious Deportment shew him,
here ow he may render himself Beloved, and
e the eneficial to Mankind.

He And so the Scholar continues a Stranger
r for this Exercise: That will be taught no-
tion ing, but what is pleasing to his brutish
He appetite: That values himself upon the E-
Enc- ate he is to inherit; and had rather be
nces gnorant and rich, than wise and sober:
hum hat stops his Ears against the sound In-
eads tructions of his Tutor, and delights in no-
Ne- ing so much, as Froth, and Vanity: That
Ma- ad rather handle a pack of Cards, than his
ex- Bible; and is more taken with a fine Suit
oth of Cloaths, than with the Ornaments of
in Wisdom and Understanding: That thinks
fon ll of his Master, because he seeks his Good;
ds; or calls him cruel, or insolent, because he
m, will not suffer him to follow his own Ima-
ts ginations: That spends his Time in Play,
which

Acts 22. 3.

Prov. 2. 1,

2, 3.

Prov. 1. 7,

10.

Prov. 6.6, which should be employed in Learning; and
7, 8, 9, 10. thinks no Argument solid, but what is pleas-
ed in Favour of his Laziness.

1 Tim. 6. 14. If I am rich, and mean to exercise
7, 18, 19. myself unto Godliness, as such, I must re-
member, that I am but God's Steward, as-
sent hither to disperse those Blessings
hath bestow'd upon me, among those
hath made Objects of my Charity. I must
not oppress the Poor, because he cannot
hurt me; nor deny another Man what
due to him; because he hath no Power
withstand me. I must make myself Friend
of the Mammon of Unrighteousness; as
so husband that Estate I have, as to provide
for everlasting Habitations. I must not think
myself the better Man for my Riches, no
fancy God will be more kind to me in the
Day, because my Enjoyments were greater
here, than my Neighbours. I must mistrust
my own Prosperity, and look upon it,
more dangerous, than the greatest Misfor-
Psal. 62. I must walk very circumspectly in my Affli-
10. cence, and take heed my Heart be not set
Things, which, before I am aware, will
make themselves Wings, and fly away.
Matth. 19. I must make the Poor my Pensioners, and lay
23. up a good Foundation against the Time
Luk. 19.8. come. I must be liberal and bountiful, as
expect God should be munificent to me, and
believe, I am unjust, if I do not according
to my Ability, provide for Christ's distressed

g; and Members. I must learn to be humble in Jam. 1. 10.
plea the Midst of my Plenty; and the more
blessings God heaps upon me, the more I
exerc must grow in Grace and Holiness. I must Jam. 2. 1,
must grow in Grace and Holiness. I must 2, 3, 4, 5.
study how I may do good, and make it the
great Concern of my Life, so to deport my-
self in this Condition, that I may inherit E-
ternal Life.

I must As a poor Man, I then exercise myself Prov. 10.
cannot into Godliness, when I am contented with 4.
that the Condition I am in, and labour in the Prov. 24.
ever sweat of my Brows, to get mine own Bread; 30.
Friend When I do not indulge myself in Idleness, Prov. 26.
; and go upon this Principle, that he that 13.
provi will not work, neither shall he eat; When 2 Theff. 3.
thing envy not the Rich, their vast Possessions, 10.
e, n and rejoyce in having but Food and Rai-
in the ment, as much as others do in a great Inhe-
reat rance; When I labour to be poor in Spi-
instr it, and keep myself from repining, and
it, mistrusting God's Providence; When I am Matth. 5.
Lifer ambitious of the Riches of Grace, and thirst 6.
Affl after nothing so much, as the Treasure,
set which Thieves cannot steal away; When
w the Kingdom I seek, is the Kingdom of 1 Cor. 15.
y. God, and his Righteousness, and nothing 58.
l la ngrosses my Desires so much, as to be al-
ne ways abounding in the Work of the Lord,
as orasmuch as I know, my Labour is not in
an vain in the Lord.

15. Then I exercise myself unto Godli-
ness, as a Great Man, or a Man of a Gen-
tile,

2 Chron. 34. 2. tile, and Noble Extract; When I mind
 Things Great and Generous, and slight those
 Lusts which other Men admire, and make
 pleasing God, the chief Care of my Life
 while others make it their principal Care and
 Business, to please and gratify themselves
 Acts 13. 7. When I undervalue that World others do
 Acts 8. 27, 28. on, and love that God with Zeal, and Fer-
 vency, whom others love only in Words
 and vain Pretences; When I pray with
 Groans, which cannot be uttered, while o-
 thers draw nigh to God only with their Lips,
 and their Hearts are far from him; and dare
 Heb. 11. lose something for Christ, while others fol-
 24, 25, 26. low him no farther, than is consistent with
 their Temporal Glory; When I mind that
 which many Kings, and Prophets, and
 Righteous Men have desired to see, even
 the Spiritual Riches of Grace, and the e-
 verlasting Mercies of *David*; When I mind
 Psal. 84. 1. that, for which *Abraham* forsook his own
 2. Country, and *Moses* left the dazzling Glories
 Pl. 16. 11. of *Pharaoh's* Court, and for which, Saints
 and Martyrs have spilt their Blood; even
 that everlasting Kingdom of Bliss, which
 Sense cannot fathom, and no Eye can per-
 ceive, but that of an illuminated Under-
 standing, and which the King Immortal,
 who cannot lye, hath promised to the Man,
 that shall be faithful unto Death; When
 I am ambitious of the Company of that vast
 Multitude we read of, *Rev. 7. 9.* which no
 Man

Man can number, out of all Nations, Kindred, Tongues, and People, that stand before the Throne, and before the Lamb, with Palms in their Hands, and cloathed in White Raiment, and cry Day and Night, *Salvation unto our God, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* When I can offer Free-will Offerings to God, and am so far from being frightened at the Gift, God requires at my Hands, that I am ready to do more than I have an exprefs Command for, like the Pillars of the Tabernacle, who being bid to bring in their Proportions, freely offered more than their Share, and were so free to give, that *Moses* was forced to put a stop to their Generosity and Liberality, *Exod.* 36. 3, 5, 6.

And to add no more, then I exercise myself unto Godliness, as a common ordinary Man, as a Man in a lower Sphere, and private Station; When I am just in all my Dealings, and in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, have my Conversation in the World. When I live in a Sense of God's Mercy, and am ready to do good Offices to all my Neighbours; When I study Truth in my Trade and Calling, and as much as in me lies, provide Things honest in the Sight of all Men; When I am not slothful in Business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord, rejoycing in Hope, patient

2 Cor. 8.

1, 2, 3.
2 Cor. 9.

Acts 2. 44
45.

Rom. 12.

1, 9, 10,
11, 12, 13.

2 Cor. 1.

12.
2 Thess. 3:
7, 8.

Rom. 12,
18.

ent in Tribulation, continuing instant in Prayer, &c.

Luke 18.
11.

You see, *Christians*, what it is to be universally conscientious. In vain doth the Pharisee boast, *I thank thee, O God, that I am not as other Men, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, nor even as this Publican*. As much as he valued himself upon his Perfections, it was nothing but Rags, and menstruous Cloaths; for in this Catalogue no Duties of his several Relations are mentioned, and he knew not what it was to live like a Divine, or like a Loyal Subject. Let *Alexander* boast of his conquering *Persia*, *India*, and other Countries, and mourn that there are no more Worlds to conquer. He that faithfully discharges the Duties of his several Relations, is a greater Man. Such a Man is sensible, that God will not be put off with Shews, and Shadows, nor with a Righteousness, that is as a Morning Cloud, and as the early Dew, which passeth away. Such a Man receives the Kingdom of Heaven as a little Child, and doth not stand out for want of Pains: Such a Man is resolved to know God, and what the exceeding Greatness of his Power is to them who believe.

O Sirs, retire, and think of the Reasonableness of this Exercise: O that we could make you see the Necessity of it! O that it lay in my Power to persuade you to it!

O that

that I had Rhetorick enough to charm
you! O that I had the Tongues of Angels
catch your Inclinations by a holy Guile!
that it is not Eloquence will do it; God's
spirit must breathe upon you; and O that
his blessed Spirit would blow upon you,
and compel you to come in, and make you so
sensible of the Love of God, that you might
not be able to withstand it's Force, but be-
come greedy and ambitious of this Employ-
ment! You would then see, how much these
Men are mistaken, how much they are out,
that a wrong Way they take, that place all
Religion in a few heartless Prayers, and
careless Wishes, and will not be persuaded
to believe, that God ever commanded this
faithful Discharge of the Duties of their se-
veral Relations and Callings; and that they
may not be obliged to it, are resolved to
continue in that Unbelief to their dying Day:
You would be ready to call after them, *A-
wake ye that Sleep, and Christ shall give you
Light*: You would wonder that they take
no greater Care to dress up their Souls for
the Marriage of the Lamb! O how you
would pity them, bemoan them, and wish
for a Fountain of Tears to bewail their Stub-
bornness! O how you would be frighted to
see what Burthens they lay upon their Backs!
Burthens insupportable; Burthens, which
will crush them; Burthens, which will
make them cry out, one Day, O that there
had

had been such a Heart in me! O that I had kept close to the Law, and to the Testimony! O that I had look'd more to my Way! O that I had remembred what a Charge God gave me! O that I had given Ease to my Soul when Christ offered to refresh me! O that I had submitted to his Yoke in all Things, when he promised me Rest for my Soul!

We have innumerable Examples of Men who even in this Life have felt the Burthen of God's Anger for their unfaithful Discharge of these Duties: How many Fathers have groan'd under a Sense of Neglect of their Duty to their Children? How many Children have smarted for the Neglect of their Parents? How hath God punished Princes? How hath he visited Subjects for their Carelesness of these mutual Offices? How many Servants have complained that they have been undone, because their Masters admonish'd them not? How many Masters have been ruined, because their Servants remembred not what Faithfulness, and what Duties, God required at their Hands? And if God's Anger against these Neglects be so heavy in this Life, what will it be in the Day of Wrath and in the Day of Indignation? The Judgments God sends upon Men here, are but Shadows of the Future, Embellishments of greater Plagues in another World. Representations of more violent Storms than

to follow, and God punishes some on-
that the rest may take warning; and
if he punishes, he punishes but gently
shew, that if these Rods cannot soften
Hearts, and invite them to Humiliati-
that these are but Fore-runners of more
painful Scourges.

The Prayer.

Most Glorious God! who hast fitted thy
holy and wholesome Laws to my Wants
and Necessities, and in commanding me, dost
consult my Interest and Advantage more than
Profit and Glory; How am I bound to
praise and magnify thy Bounty! Thou hast
taught me how to live and behave myself in
all Conditions, and to make me a Soldier
completely armed, hast chalked out to me the
particular Step I am to tread. As these are
all of the Blessings of thy right Hand, so
may my Soul admire them above those of thy left.
Whatever Estate I am in, whatever Relati-
on Calling, Station I stand in, give me
grace to adorn it with a suitable Conversa-
tion. Teach me how to behave myself wisely
in a perfect Way. O when wilt thou come
to me! O let me remember, that in the
calling thou hast placed me in, thou hast
called me to certain Duties, of which thou
wilt take an Account one Day. O convince
me that I am not called to Idleness, but to la-

hour in thy Vineyard. When my carnal He
would baulk the Work, thou hast set me,
the Station I am in, let thy good Spirit overcome
my Unwillingness, and manifest his Power
in my Weakness. I am backward to any thing
that requires Pains and Circumspection, re-
new thou a right Spirit within me.
thou exalted, Lord, above the Heavens, and
thy Glory above all the Earth. If thou wilt
but appear in my Soul, every Thing will yield
and every rebellious Lust will bow to thy Ma-
jesty. Nothing can resist thy Omnipotence
and what-ever desire in me hath been bit-
to refractory and rebellious, will be frigh-
ed at thy Presence, and either retire, or
come subject to thy Power. O prepare My-
thy Grace and Truth, which may preserve me, and
my Mouth shall sing of thy Righteousness.
let me remember that every new Relation
brings a new Obligation upon me; and that
if I regard not that Obligation, I am un-
faithful to my God. In every Condition,
every Relation let me consider the Duties
cumbent upon me, and make me zealous
to discharge them. Let not the Example of
others, whose Consciences are seared, tempt
to neglect them. O tell my Soul, that it is
better to have thy Favour, than the Applause
of Men; and teach me so to prize it that I
be content to leave all to obtain it, through
Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen,

IX. Exercise.

To resist all Sorts of Temptations; an Exercise peremptorily commanded, Jam. 1. 12, Jam. 4. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Epbes. 15. Heb. 12. 4. Temptations must try our Courage, and discover what Mettle we are made of. Temptations are as necessary, as difficulties in getting an Estate, and their greatness doth but whet our Appetite to overcome them: Without Temptations, the way to Life would be broad and easy; and were it not for these, every Fool could go to Heaven. They that dream of Feather-beds in the way to Happiness, know not what Temptations are; and were Men but sensible, what resisting of Temptations means, they would not play the Fool, and fancy that a slovenly Belief in Jesus Christ will spread open to them the Gates of Everlasting Mercy. The Conquest of Temptations makes the great Difference between a true Believer, and a Hypocrite; and there is not a surer Sign, that a Man is perishing, than his being loth to encounter with these enemies.

Most Men complain of Temptations, and yet there are but few, that do oppose them; and the Generality are so besotted, as to imagine, that nothing is a Temptation, but what prompts them to open Profaneness,

and some notorious Impiety. Temptation no doubt may come from Friends, as well as from Enemies, and a Father, or a Mother, may be a Tempter, as well as our greatest Adversary. Temptations may arise from Ourselves, as well as from Strangers, and our own Bosoms may furnish us with Fuel for Sin as much, as Extrinsic Objects. And indeed there are no Temptations so dangerous, as those that come from within; and the Devil himself could do us no hurt, but that our own Hearts do second his fatal Enterprize. Outward Objects can only present themselves to our Minds, but it's our Minds, make the first Motion to Transgression. He that resists his Evil Thoughts, resists the strongest Rebels; and what can all the other Assaults signify, while the Mind is guarded against Invasion?

It is not a faint-hearted Resistance, that will disperse these Insects; and he that is irresolute, and will, and will not, tempt the Prince of the Air to believe, that he hath no serious Purposes. Here nothing but Boldness will do good, and he that by weak Sallies means to repulse this Flying Army of the Devil, doth but make himself an Object of their Scorn. When young *Hilarion* began to be troubled with unclean Thoughts, and did not know yet, how to resist them, the innocent Lad fell a beating his Breast till he made it sore; and thought

Hieron.
Vit. Hilar.
c. 3.

It was not the only Remedy, yet it shew'd
that he was in good Earnest resolv'd to
oppose them. Of all the Temptations of
the Devil, there is none that he values so
much, as those that are levelled either a-
gainst our venturing on the Power of God-
liness, or against Continuance in Serious-
ness.

1. Such as are levell'd against our ven-
turing on the Power of Godliness. The
Devil is content, we should play about the
outfides of Religion, in the Suburbs of De-
votion, in the Antichamber to true Piety;
as long as he can keep us from the Banquet-
ing House, the Banner whereof is Love, he
can bear with our little Acts of Worship,
and dispence with our playing with Religi-
on. The inconsiderable Services which pro-
ceed only from Custom, he doth not value
much; and he is content we should use a
form of Godliness, being sensible, that Hy-
pocrisy will damn as soon, as more open De-
baucheries.

2. Such as are levelled against our hold-
ing out in Seriousness, or Continuance in
it. He knows to whom the Crown is pro-
fessed, even to him that's faithful unto
death, and hath seen God set the Diadem
of Righteousness on the Heads of those that
have continued with Christ Jesus in his
temptations. He knows the Scripture, and
is sensible, that the Man that holds out to

the last, will certainly enjoy the Delights God's Bosom; and therefore to conquer such a Man, that labours hard for Salvation, and to stop him in his Progress, looks upon as his proudest Victory. Antiquity hath expressed it by this *Apologue* *Lucifer* having sent out his Officers to the World with Death, and Ruin, they went on their several Errands. Upon their Return, he demands an Account of their Proceedings, What Mischief they had done, What Plagues they had scattered, and what Calamities they had sent among affrighted Mortals. One of them more forward than the rest, replied, he had been a Fortnight wandering about, and at last had overturned some Merchants Ships at Sea, infomuch that both Men and Goods were lost. The Prince of Darkness enraged at his Laziness, instead of a Reward, gave him a hundred Lashes because he had done no more Hurt all that Time. Another Spirit stands forth, and boasts, that he had been for a Month together contriving, how to set such a City on Fire, and had at last effected it; and he also was severely punished for his Idleness, and Neglect of accomplishing his Design no sooner. At last comes forth a third, that had been forty Years absent, and being asked how he had spent his Time, and how he had promoted the Interest of the Black Empire, answered, These forty Years have

in tempting such a Religious Man to For-
 nation, and have at last prevailed, and at
 Time he wallows securely in his Sin.
 elzebub immediately rises from his Throne,
 the Fiend, embraces the Child of Dark-
 s, and with Rhetorick fetcht from Hell,
 mmends him before all the howling Crew,
 having done a greater Exploit after forty
 ears travel, than the others by afflicting and
 consuming so many Men, and Ships, and
 omises in a few Days, or Weeks. The
 moral of the Fable is no other, but this, That
 he can make a sincere Believer weary of
 Heavenly-mindedness, and burning Zeal
 God's Glory, he values that Injury more,
 an if he tempted a thousand Reprobates
 greater Impieties.

Alas! What great Conquest is it, to per-
 ade the Proud to Covetousness, or the
 drunkard to Adultery? The Wretch was
 s before, and there is nothing in the Temp-
 tion to gratify his Envy, and Haughti-
 ness; but to stop the Man that runs well, to
 make him end in the Flesh, that hath begun
 in the Spirit, and to make him turn Enemy,
 that before was a Disciple; This is great,
 and answers the proud Designs of that Hel-
 ish Monarch. Pyrates do not meddle with
 poor and empty Fisher-boat, but when
 Ships come richly laden, full of precious
 Wares, then they bestir themselves, and take
 pains to master it: So the Devil, when he

Chrysof.
 Epist. ad
 Demet.
 Virg.

sees a Soul richly laden with Fruits, sees
 Man hath got a vast Stock together, of Alms
 and Prayers, and other Virtues, upon him
 he sets, and nothing pleases him, like Robbing
 such a Person of his Treasure. The
 empty Traveller fears no Robbers; The
 Beggar sleeps securely in his Cottage; The
 Shepherd is not afraid of High-way-men.
 The Indigent Day-Labourer needs not
 lock up his Doors at Night; But the Man
 that's Rich, Wealthy, and abounds in Gold,
 whose Purse is full, and whose Coffers are ready
 to burst with the weight of Money, that
 the Man, that hath reason to be afraid of
 Enemies. So it is with Grace, and Holiness.
 The Holier Men are, the more they may
 expect the Devil's Assaults; and the richer
 their Souls are in Faith, and good Works,
 the more they may look for the Rage of the
 Roaring Lyon; for nothing is a greater
 Eye-sore to him, than *Eve* in Paradise, and
 a Soul encircled with Celestial Glory; and
 nothing stings him more, than that a Creature
 made a little lower than the Angels
 should be in a probability of being placed
 in the same Form with Angels.

To resist these two grand Temptations
 is the Intent of this Exercise; which consists,
 1. In arming ourselves with the Word
 of God. 2. In praying for Help and Assistance
 from Above against such Assaults. 3. In
 getting others to pray for us, and to coun-

el us. 4. In being more cautious for the future, in Case the Temptation do prevail.

1. *In arming ourselves with the Word of God*; With this Sword Christ cut the Devil's Temptations asunder; with this Shield the Apostles weathered his fiercest Tempest. With this Helmet the Saints of old blunted his sharpest Arrows; and he that hath no Skill at this Weapon, may resist but weakly, fight but with feeble Hands, and at the best cannot hold out long. These Holy Oracles are the Arms wherewith the Lord of Hosts will have us engage Legions of Devils, whole Armies of Lusts, and all the Troops of the World's Enticements, and Flatteries; and that you may know, how this is to be done, I cannot satisfy you better, than by setting before you the noble Example of *St. Paula*, whose Resistance *St. Jerom*, who was intimately acquainted with her, describes in this Manner. When she was tempted, to give sparingly to the Poor, she presently replied, *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy*. When tempted to revile those that reviled her, her Thoughts were the same with the Psalmist's, *I said, I will take heed to my Ways, that I sin not with my Tongue; I will keep my Mouth with a Bridle, while the wicked is before me*. In Crosses, and Disappointments, when tempted to repining, her Voice was, *Tribulation*

Vid. Hieron. Vit. St. Paul. c. 15, 16, 17.

Matthew 5. 7.

Psal. 39. 1.

Rom. 5. 45.

work-5.

- worketh Patience, and Patience Hope, and Hope makes not ashamed.* When tempted to
- Kai. 49. 1.** *Impatience, she cryed, I have heard thee in an acceptable Time, in the Day of Salvation have I succoured thee.* When tempted in her frequent Sickneses, to complain, she
- 2 Cor. 12. 10.** *check'd the Motion with this, When I am weak, then am I strong; and again, As the*
- 2 Cor. 1. 5.** *Sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our Consolation also aboundeth by Christ.* When in Grief she was tempted to mourn, like one
- Psal. 42. 11.** *without Hope, she cryed, Why art thou cast down, O my Soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the Health of my Countenance, and my God.* When in Danger, she was tempted to mistrust God's Providence, this was her Language, *Whoever will*
- Matth. 16. 24.** *come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.* When she had lost all her outward Means, and was tempted to doubt of God's Goodness, and to question his Justice, she said, *What shall it profit a*
- Matth. 16. 26.** *Man, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul? And again, Naked*
- Job. 1. 21.** *came I from my Mothers Womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: Blessed be the Name of the Lord.* When the beloved *Toxotius*, her Husband, died, and she was tempted to despair, this came into her Mind, and

with this she checkt the ill Suggestion; *He* Matth. 10.
that loves Father or Mother, and consequent- ^{7.}
ly Husband, or Children, more than me, is
not worthy of me. When some charged her
 with Madnefs, because of her excessive love
 to Christ, and she was tempted to give them
 unhandfome Language, thus she stopt her-
 self, *We are made a Spectacle to Angels and* 1 Cor. 4.
to Men, we are Fools for Christ his Sake, 9, 10, 13.
being defamed, we entreat. Thus this excel-
 lent Matron overcame Temptations, and the
 Enemy could fix nothing that was ill, upon
 her, because she was provided with Arrows
 from the Quiver of the Holy Ghost.

2. *In Praying against Temptations.* This
 hath in all Ages been counted part of this
 Exercise; and he that considers with what
 force Temptations come upon us sometimes,
 will believe it necessary to call in the Divine
 Arm for our Assistance. This was the com-
 mand of him, who was tempted in all
 Things, as we ourselves, yet without Sin,
Matthew 26. 41. and what is impossible
 with Men, is easily effected by him, whose
 Power cannot by searching be found out. No-
 thing can be difficult to Omnipotence; and
 as dreadful as some Temptations seem, if
 the help of God's Spirit be called down by
 fervent Prayer, they'll dissolve, and melt as
 Wax before the Fire: For as Flies never set-
 tle upon a Pot, that's thoroughly heated, so
 Temptations fix not on the Man, whose
 Heart

Paschal.
c. 39.

Heart is enflamed by earnest Prayer, said *Pimenius*. A good Man, saith another, must fancy, that on one side of him there is Fire, on the other side Water, and as often as he finds the House on Fire, he must quench it with the Water, *i. e.* when-ever any evil Thought rises in his Mind, he must have Recourse to his Prayers, and extinguish it.

2 Cor. 12.
8.

In these Prayers, the chief Thing to be begg'd of God, is Power and Courage to overcome the Temptation, not Freedom from all Temptations. For though it's lawful enough in some Cases, to beg, that Satan's Angel may depart from us, especially where the Temptation hinders us in the Conscientious Discharge of our Duty; yet for the most part it's safer to pray, that the Temptation may not overcome us, than that it may totally leave us. For Temptations make us watchful, help to polish our Souls, and advance our Assurance of Salvation: For indeed, how shall we know, we have the Graces, and Fruits of God's Spirit, without Temptations make the Tryal, or except by our resisting we learn to know, that we have not received the Grace of God in vain. It was therefore no ill Advice, which one *Pastor* gave to a Man, who intended for Seriousness and prayed hard, that God would remove all evil Suggestions from him, and accordingly was heard, and began

gan to be calm and easy. Go, saith he to him, and beg of God, that these Enemies may return and pursue thee by Temptations, for this will make thy Soul grow, and signally advance in Holiness: Which Counsel the young Man followed, and when he found himself assaulted again by evil Motions, he pray'd no longer that he might be deliver'd from the opportunity of Striving, but to be endow'd with Patience to endure the Fight, and to vanquish the Temptation.

3. *In getting others to pray for us;* Our single Prayers many times will do no good, and God wisely doth not grant the Blessing, we pray for, on purpose, that we may get others to joyn with us in our Prayers; so did St. Paul, 2 *Theff.* 3. 1, 2. 2 *Cor.* 1. 11. Joint Forces do storm Heaven, and when Prayers mount up, as *David* went into the Temple, with the Multitude that keeps Holy Day, the Almighty bows down his Ear, and sends them away with a Blessing. But then he that desires a Religious Man to pray for him, that God would give him Grace to conquer, must joyn his own earnest Endeavours with that good Man's Prayer, else he doth but mock God, and the Holy Man too, whose Pains in Prayer he desires. And to this Purpose I will set down a Passage in *Ruffinus*. A young Man being much assaulted with Thoughts of Uncleanness, or La-

Ruffin.
Vit. Patr.
l. 3 c. 13.

sciviousness,

sciviousness, went to a Divine of great Integrity and Seriousness, entreating him to supplicate for him at the Throne of Grace that he might be Master of his Passions. The honest Man promised he would, and accordingly begg'd God's Assistance in his Behalf, Day and Night. The young Man still visited him, and bid him double and treble his Supplications, for as yet he found no good, and desired him to sollicit the Almighty with very great Importunity, and so the good Preacher did; But finding the young Man returning ever and anon, with the same Complaints, he began to take on and mourn before God, and admire, that God who had formerly heard his Orisons should deny him Audience now; But while he was thus musing, he fell asleep, and in a Dream, saw that young Man sitting on a Chair, and some evil Spirits, in the Shape of beautiful Women, dancing before him at which Motions he expressed some Delight, and Satisfaction; and while he thus pleased himself with the Sight, an Angel came down from Heaven, and chid him severely, because he did not rise at the dangerous Spectacle, throw himself down upon his Face, and wrestle with God in Prayer in order to a Conquest. With that, the Religious Divine awakes, and from the Dream, concludes the Reason, why God had not heard his Prayers, sends for the young

young Man, expostulates with him, and tells him; Friend, I am sensible, my Prayers can do thee no good, for except thou wilt watch against thy unclean Thoughts, and take Pains thyself, and go about the Work like a Man resolved to be rid of the Temptation, neither mine, or other Mens Prayers, will be of any great Advantage to thee; For let a Physician administer Remedies, and Medicines never so proper, if the Patient will needs eat that which will do him hurt, and will not abstain from Things that are his Bane, all the Physicians Care and Labour must be lost: The young Man heard him patiently, and being prickt at the Heart, threw himself down at the Preacher's Feet, confessed his Folly, and began to afflict and mortify himself, and now the Temptation abates, and he is cured.

This desiring others to pray for us, when assaulted by strong Temptations, will give us opportunity to discover ourselves to the Charitable Man, whose Assistance in Prayer, we desire, and helps us to defeat that Stratagem of the Devil, whereby he keeps us from revealing the Thoughts of our Hearts, and the Temptations we lie under, to those who are able by their Advice and Counsel, to relieve us; How many Souls have been restored to Joy again, that have broke through this Snare, and open'd, and disburthen'd their Grief to some faithful Minister

Ruffin.
lib. 3. Sect.
57.

nister of the Gospel, which before lay heavy: And was ready to sink them into Self Destruction! So have I read of a distressed Christian, who being assaulted with Blasphemous Thoughts, attempted often to go to Divines, and consult with them about his Spiritual Wants, but still something or other hindred him from making his secret Trouble known; at last meeting with an eminent Saint, one *Poëmon*, who seeing Consternation in his Face, and asking him what ailed him, he discover'd to him the Worm that gnaw'd his Heart; and on a sudden he found such Calmness and Serenity in his Spirit, that he seem'd quite another Man, which by degrees increased, as he follow'd the good Man's Counsel, which was, That when-ever the Devil assaulted him with Blasphemy, he should reply, *Let thy Blasphemy, Devil, be on thy own Head, for I'll have nothing to do with it.*

Lu. 22.33

4. *In rising again, and being more cautious for the Future, in Case a Temptation doth prevail.* By this rising again, I do not mean, going round like Witches, in a Circle of Repenting, and Sinning, and Sinning and Repenting; but if after long and strong Opposition, we fall against our Wills, not to lie still one Moment in the Sin, but to get up with Speed, and put on greater Resolutions, and double our Diligence, that we may not be surpriz'd again; Thus did *S. Peter*, the ill Company in

the High Priest's Hall, presses hard upon
him, and fear of being abused by them, pre-
sails with him to deny that Master, whom
he saw in Misery. But he hath no sooner
known the Fact, but his Heart smites him,
and he goes out and weeps bitterly; and af-
ter this no Torment, no Pain, no Contempt,
no Frown of great Men, no Smiles of Prin-
ces can persuade him to the same Sin again;
not *Herod's* Imprisonment, not the stern
looks of the High Priests, nor the Indigna-
tion of the *Saducees*, nor *Nero's* Cruelty; af-
ter this, he is so stedfast, that his Faith vies
with Rocks, and becomes like Mount *Sion*,
which can never be moved.

It's like *Cæsarius*, the famous *Nazian-*
zen's Brother, might be tempted by the Pre-
sents *Julian* the Apostate heaped upon
him, to comply with the ill-natured Empe-
rour in his Humour; and grow mealy-mouth'd,
and cowardly in speaking for Christ, and
indicating his Divinity and Glory; But up-
on his Brother's Letter to him; behold, how
readily the great Man rises from his Slumber,
tells the Apostate, that he'll keep his Prefer-
ments, upon the Condition of dissembling
no longer, forsakes the Glories of the Court,
leaves his Treasurers Place, and prefers Po-
verty, Contempt and Ignominy, before the
acclamations and Salutations of the Multi-
tude, and in this despicable Condition ends
his Days.

Greg. Naz.
Epist. 17.

Q

So

Socrat. l. 3.
c. 11.

So did *Ecebolius*, *Julian's* Offers tempt him to Desertion; he falls, accepts of the wicked Monarch's Favour, but here he could not rest long, something within gnawed his Heart; he rises, prostrates himself before God's People, calls to them, *Tread upon me, trample on this unfavourable Salt*; and after this, we hear no more of his Fickleness and Inconstancy.

To lie still in a notorious Sin, is to sleep on a Dunghill, and which is worse, *to make our Bed in Hell*, but he that like *Darius* makes his Fall, an Opportunity of being more serious, gets by his Sin, and extracts Oil out of that stinking Weed, which gives his Limbs new Strength, and Vigour, and Alacrity.

This is to exercise ourselves in resisting Temptations; and Oh that the dull World would understand, what a stress the Holy Ghost lays upon his Labour! They would not then let Temptations ride in Triumph into their Souls, they would not open the Gates to these Locusts to let them in, but come out with Swords and Staves against them, as against Thieves and Murthurers. They would go another way to work, than now they do. It's a wonderful Thing to see how awkwardly Men go about this Conquest; a serious Spectator must needs think they have no mind to it, and that what they do, is for no other end, but to satisfy

the secret Stings, and Twitches of a frightened conscience.

When Men heretofore took delight in this Exercise, they studied which way they might overcome Temptations, and made it the great Object of their Contrivance, how to be eminent in this Victory, how to silence the hellish Dogs, that bark'd at them, and how to convince even the Devil himself, that from the bottom of their Hearts, they abhorred the Sins they were provoked to: When they were tempted to unlawful Lusts, they resisted the Motion by great Abstinence, and hard Fare, and harder Lodging; When they had a Mind to resist a Temptation to Covetousness, they crossed Flesh and blood, and gave away more than they could spare; When they were minded to resist a Temptation to Anger, they did good to the Offender; When they would resist a Temptation to Revenge, they would watch an opportunity to shew their Love and Compassion to the Person that had done them the Injury; When they resisted a Temptation to Quarrel, or Litigiousness, they deceded from their own Right; When they would resist a Temptation of Vain Glory, they would do something, that should render them contemptible; When a Temptation to Pride, they call'd to mind their Imperfections, their Defects in Grace, and how short they fell of the Perfection of greater Saints. Their

Conquest cost them Pains and he that take this Way, discovers his Sincerity in the Opposition.

Who can read of *eating of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God*; Of not being hurt by the *Second Death*; Of feeding on the *hidden Manna*, and receiving the *white Stone*, and in the Stone a new Name, written, which no Man knoweth saving he that receives it, of ruling Nations with a *Rod of Iron*; Of possessing the *Morning Star*; Of having his Name writ in the *Book of Life*; Of having the *Honour* of being confess'd, and own'd before God the Father and his Angels; Of being clothed in *white Raiment*; Of being made a *Pillar in the Temple of God*, whence he shall go out no more; Of having the *Name of God* engraven upon him, and the *Name of the City of God*, which is the *New Jerusalem*, which comes down out of *Heaven from God*; Of inheriting all Things, and of being freed from *Fears, and Pain, and Death, and Sorrows, and Curses, and Darknefs*; Blessings promised by the *Holy Ghost* to Men, who resist and overcome: Who can read, I say, of all these, and feel no Warmth, no Heat to drive away Temptations, and to strive for Mastery. But then, Christians, if you resist let nothing interrupt your Resistance, but Death itself. Remember who it is that cries, *When the Righteous turns from his Righteousness and cometh*

Vid. R.
Mole Cor-
duero
tract. de
anima. c. 7.

his Iniquity, he shall die in his Sin, and his Righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembred, Ezek. 3. 20. To resist unto Blood is something, but to resist unto Death is more: After Death the Enemy can tempt no more, but while there is Life he will not give over; except we resist as long as he tempts, we expose ourselves to his Fury, and he will tempt, while we are above Ground. If we are not tired with resisting, we make him despair of Success, and his Assaults grow weaker, the more stiff we are in our Duty. I conclude this Exercise with the Advice of the *Pious Syncretica*; The Devil not being able to make People weary of walking in the ways of God by Poverty, tries what Riches will do; and if he prevails not by Calumnies, and Reproaches, he'll make an Attempt by Praise and Honour; Where he cannot seduce by carnal Delights, there he discourages by the tediousness and laboriousness of Religion; many times by Sicknes, and long-lasting Miseries he tries whether he can discompose good Men, in their Love to their Gracious Redeemer. But, Christian, let thy Body be cut and wounded, fry in burning Fevers, and tormented with excessive Thirst; being a Sinner, remember the Torments of another World, and the everlasting Fire, and this will keep thee from fainting under all the Crosses and Miseries here; Rejoyce, because God doth visit thee, and have ever that memorable Saying in thy

Pelag. lib.
7. c. 16.

Psal. 118,
18.

Mouth; *The Lord hath chastened, and corrected me sore, but he hath not given me over unto Death.* If thou art Iron, this Fire will burn away thy Rust. If thou art a Saint, and suffered such Things, from these great Conquests thou wilt be advanced, and promoted to greater Dignities in Heaven. If thou art Gold, this Furnace will make thee finer. Is Satan's Angel given thee to buffet thee? Rejoyce to think, whom thou art like, for this was St. Paul's Affliction, and St. Paul's Glory will fall to thy Share.

The Prayer.

O Lord of Hosts! who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy Faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the Sea, when the Waves thereof arise, Thou seest what Temptations I am encompassed with, what Enemies surround me, and how I am beset with Dangers. Extend thy Mercy to me, and send from above and take me. Deliver me from my strong Enemy, and from them which hate me. Leave me not to the Rage of Temptations, neither give me up to the Will of those that persecute my Soul. I will arise, O God, and fight the good Fight. Teach me what Temptations are, and give Notice to my Soul when I am in danger. I know, O Lord, all Places, Callings and Employments, bring Temptations with them.

How

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How diligent, how watchful ought I to be, that I do not get a Fall, and that mine Enemy rejoyce not over me. Yet I will not be afraid, if thou art with me. I may defy all that are against my Soul to destroy it: For thou, Lord, wilt bless the Righteous, and with thy Favour thou wilt compass him, as with a Shield. Up Lord! and pluck thy Hand out of thy Bosom: Enable me to put on the whole Armour of God. Gird about me the Sword of the Spirit, and with that let me recover the Glory I have lost in Adam's Fall. O God I will cry Day and Night unto thee; give me Wisdom and Resolution to secure thy Favour. I cannot secure it, except I hate the Works of them that hate thee, and am grieved with those that rise up against thee. O Lord, mine own Flesh, and the World, and Messengers from Hell, are confederate against thee. O teach my Hands to War, and my Fingers to Fight. My Rock, my Fortrefs, my Deliverer, my God, my Strength, in whom I will trust, my Buckler and the Horn of my Salvation, and my high Tower, cover my Head in the Day of Battle. Let mine Eye see my desire on the Temptations which annoy me. Hear my Voice out of thy Temple, and let my Cry come before thee, even into thine Ears. Arm me with Arguments; suggest unto me Reasons, whereby I may answer, and resist evil Motions which would seduce my Soul. Give me Pow-

er to climb thy Holy Hill: When I faint, Lord support me; when I grow weary, furnish me with fresh Motives to hold on; when I would go back, persuade me to press toward the Mark; when I fall let thy Angels bear me up in their Hands. O thou that hast done great Things for me, marvellous Things on this side Heaven, strengthen my Faith, that I may endure Temptation, and being tried, may receive the Crown of Righteousness, which thou hast promised to them that love thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XII. Exercise.

To stand in Awe of God, when we are alone, and no Creature sees us. An Exercise commanded, Psal. 139. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Psal. 4. 4. Psal. 10. 13, 14. Heb. 4. 13. One would think that the bare Belief of the Being of God, should be a sufficient Argument to any Man to fear him, when he is alone, and behave himself with that Reverence and Decency, he would use, were the greatest visible Monarch of this World present with him. But, alas! the generality of Men dare to do that in private, when none, but God and they are together, which they would be afraid to do before the meanest Slave; and their Minds, after their Bodies are once lock'd up, are as busy to plot Mischief and Wickedness, as if
none,

none, no not God himself could look into those Cabinets. They dare to think that before God, which they would tremble to utter before Men; and harbour Things in their Hearts, in the sight of the Almighty, which they would not for a World Men should know of, yet they matter not whether God knows it, or no; and this is Satisfaction enough to them, that they can hide their vain Imaginations from their Neighbours. How does the Thief rejoyce, when he finds no Person in the Room, that can disturb him! How is the Fornicators, and Adulterer's Fancy tickled, to see, that the Chamber, or the House he is in, with his Harlot, is void of Company! Sots and Fools! The God that gave them Life, and Being, and who supports them every Minute, looks upon them, and mourns, and they regard it not!

A Christian is a Man of another Temper, and exercises himself unto Godliness, when he is alone, as well as when he converses with his Neighbours; nay, is more industrious to please his kind and merciful Master, when retired from the sight of Men, than he ordinarily is, when the World looks upon him. He is afraid of Sin, though there be no Magistrate by, to over-awe him, and durst not commit any Thing, that is manifestly offensive to God, or injurious to his Neighbour, were he in a Desert or a Den. He doth good chearfully, while none but God looks

looks upon him, and is glad he hath an opportunity of doing it in Secret; because he would not be so much as suspected to be guilty of Hypocrisy. He is as modest in his Closet, as in his Dining-Room, and behaves himself with the same Gravity in a Vault, that he would do in his Parlour. He is sensible no Place can escape an All-seeing Eye, and that there is no Corner so secret, but the Father of Lights shines into it. He remembers that God will call him to an Account for secret Sins, as well as for notorious Offences; and therefore hath the same Veneration for his Holiness, when all Men are gone from him, as he hath when he is surrounded with Society. He lives in the Sence of God's Omnipresence, and whether he is on a Hill, or in the Valley, God is the same to him; The Place he knows, makes no Variation in God's Purity, and where-ever the Man is, God cannot be far from him. He pities, or smiles at the Sinner that flatters himself, that God sees him not, because he lurks in a Cave, and nothing appears so absurd to him, as to fancy, that he that made the Eye should not pierce into the remotest Corner.

Indeed, not to fear God, when we are alone, is not to fear him at all; and he that shuns Undecencies before Men only, shews that they are the Gods, whom he serves. Sobriety before Men only, is a sign, that nothing but Credit and Interest keep us in awe; and

and except we dread the very Appearance of Evil, when God alone is with us, we are but a better sort of Atheists. What doth it signify, to believe a God, and to walk, as if there were none? And to what Purpose is it to adore him, when his Greatness can have no Influence upon our Consciences? To see in secret is God's Prerogative, and we then deny it, when in secret we dare break his Law, and affront his Glory. He could not be God, if he took no notice of our Thoughts and Actions, when we are alone; and therefore not to fear him when we are in private, is to say with the Fool, there is no God; To be delighted with unlawful Objects in our Minds, while God looks on, is as great an Irreverence, as if a Man should spue before a Prince; nay, considering the vast distance between a Mortal King, and the Immortal God, the immodest Behaviour is infinitely greater, and therefore he that stands more in Awe of a Prince, than of his God, doth as good as Blaspheme; for it is a tacit Assertion, that Dust and Ashes deserves greater Honour, than the King of Heaven. Every Prayer of such a Man, will be a Witness against him in the last Day; for in every Prayer, he acknowledges God's All-seeing Purity, and by that Acknowledgment, condemns himself, for not living in private, like a Man that doth profess, and believe that Truth.

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Si purpuratus Deus imitatus fuerit, ut Regem, Angelus foret.
Saad. Ro-
far. Perf.
c. 1. p. m.
67.

He that thinks he fears God, when he is careless of his Honour, and Omnipresence in Secret, may as well think he loves his Father and Mother, when he calls them all to nought, and slights them like Dirt under his Shoes; and indeed if ever any Man was guilty of Hypocrisy, such a Man that believes God sees him, and acts as if his Eyes were shut, must be a most notorious Dissembler. It is a perfect Contradiction to believe God's Omniscience, and not to stand in awe of it, and the opposite Measures of the Mind and Actions in this Case, are so great, that did we not know they have the use of Reason for other Concerns, we should think such a Man rather distracted, than impious. If the whole World were present with us, and the whole Race of Mankind were within our View, it is not so much as when God is present with us, being alone, for the Great Creator of all these Men, is with us; He, on whose Shadow the vast Legions of Angels wait; He at whose Name all Creatures bow their Knees; and whose Hand hath made all Things, is with us at such Times; and he that is afraid of the Creature, why should not he stand in Awe of the Creator? Is the Tool a greater Thing than the Workman? Or the Pot of greater Consequence than the Potter that did make it? And though we see him not with our Eyes, yet our Minds may perceive, and feel

him;

him; and though he doth not jumble us in our Walks, or Rest, yet if we be sensible, that he is, we cannot but be sensible, if we will, that he is present too. It's not want of Power, but want of Will, that makes us careless of taking Notice of him; for we cannot own our common Principles, or any Dictates of Nature, but we must own his Presence; and we had as good deny our own Being, as deny his standing by us where-ever we are, and being displeased with the Sins we practise.

God is every where present, that we may always bear the Sense of him in our Minds; Indeed, how can we forget him, that doth every Moment remember our Frame, and remember our Wants and Necessities, and doth not forget our Work, and Labour of Love? What a mighty Favour do we count it, if a King doth think of us, or admit us into his Presence; and shall not we think it a wonderful Mercy, that the King of Glory, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace is never absent from us, and is pleased always to take Notice of us? The sick Man receives Comfort, if a Friend do visit him; and should not our Souls rejoyce, our weak, our sinful Souls, that God doth always look upon them, and takes their Concerns into Consideration? If a Prince vouchsafe a favourable look to a Servant, he thinks himself happy; and shall not we count ourselves

selves so, when our God never turns away his Eyes from us? Behold, how the Vulgar run to see a King pass by; Our God not only passes by us, but this mighty God remains with us always, every Moment encircles us with the Beams of his Majesty, and shall not we stand amazed at his Brightness? Nay, look how Men hasten to see a Monster, some unknown *African* Beast, and shall not our Hearts leap to think that an incomprehensible Beauty is continually about us? The Queen of *Sheba* comes from a-far to behold the Jewish King in his Glory, and when she sees him, wonders; we every Day behold a far greater, and far more splendid Monarch; and do we make nothing of it? How! shall not we work to do him Service, that works all our Blessings for us? How can we deal worse with a Man that hates us, than by not looking on him, when he meets us? Is God our Enemy, that we care not for beholding him in Secret, when he stands before us, in our Closets? The Glory of God surrounds us, penetrates our Souls and Bodies, more than the Sun-beam doth the Chrystal Stone; and shall not we tremble, when we are alone, at so great a Majesty? The Presence of God's Wisdom provides for us, and sees, that we may want nothing, is always busy about us, either to direct or to reward us; nay, God doth not trust his Angels with this Province, but himself watches

over

over us every Moment, every Hour like a Nurse, he carries us in his everlasting Arms. Have we such a constant Benefactor continually about us, and are not we concerned more at his Presence?

Behold, Christian, when thou art alone, that God is with thee, and in thee, and stands by thee, before whom all Angels veil their Faces, at whose Presence Devils tremble, who fills Heaven and Earth with his Glory; that God is with thee, who is altogether lovely, the Center of thy Happiness, before whom all Nations are as Grasshoppers, as the small Dust of the Balance, and as a Drop at the Bottom of a Bucket, who by his Providence, maintains thy Soul in Life, charges the Devil not to drag thee into Hell, commands the Powers of Darkness not to molest thee or Murther thee, takes care of Thyself, thy Wife, and Children, and watches Day and Night over all that thou hast; He preserves thy House from being burnt, thy Children from being drowned, thy Cattle from Rotting, thy Barns from being consum'd by Lightning; He commands, and thou takest thy Rest, speaks the Word, and no Danger come nigh; keeps thee as the Apple of his Eye, and bids his Angels to carry thee in their Hands; This God, This Beneficial God, This Immense, This Infinite, This Bountiful, This Gracious, This Munificent, This Liberal, This

This Charitable Being is with thee, and about thee every where, especially when thou art by thyself, for then there is none with thee, but he, and wilt not thou be conscientious in his Presence?

Was ever Ingratitude like this? The most ungrateful Slave, however he rails against his Benefactor behind his Back, yet is afraid to do it in his Presence; and will you revile God to his Face? What is your sinning against him, but reviling him? What is your acting contrary to his Will, but abusing him? And if he be in the Room with you, looks you in the Face when you do so, do not you reproach him to his Face? And dare you do that to him, which you dare not do to a Man of greater Power than you? Ah, but a Man would be angry with us, say you, if we should abuse him, when he is present with us, and bring us into Trouble; God never punishes us when we sin against him in private, and none but he with us. Disingenuous Wretches! Is your Eye therefore evil because God is good? Must you be vain, because God is patient? Foolish, because he suffers long? Must you sin because he doth not punish, or transgress his Laws, because by his Mercies he would oblige you to Repentance? Will you slight him, because he is kind, or undervalue him, because he caresses you to Happiness?

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Sin-

Sinner, Did the Lord Jesus appear to thee in a visible shape, while thou art alone in thy Closet; Wouldest not thou behave thyself humbly, modestly, and seriously, and submit thy Thoughts and Actions to the Presence of so Glorious a Being? Why, Christ's Divinity is with thee now, and cannot his Divinity have the same influence upon thy Spirit, that his Humanity would have? Is not his Divine, above his Humane Nature, and is not the Deity more excellent, than the most Glorious Image, or Representation?

Inconsiderate Man! If thou art minded to offend God, get Curtains, that can hide thee from his sight; for if he see, what madness is it, to conspire against him, before him? Go, get where God sees not, and then do what thou wilt: God stands with infinite Ears, and Eyes, and Understanding, about thee; and with as strong application of Spirit, as if he left contemplation of himself, to pierce thee with all his beams; and for him to see thy Disloyalties is a greater shame, than if they were represented on all the Theatres of the World.

The Soul that lives in the thoughts of God's Presence, prepares for the richest Comforts; for how can he want Joy, that is sensible the Fountain of Joy is with him? How can he want Support, that is sensible, that the God of all Consolation is with him?

R

him?

him? How can he want a refuge, or hiding place, that is sensible he hath the rock of ages in the Room with him? The Palm-tree bears Fruit when another of the same nature is set by it; how much more will a Soul bear Fruit, that is Sensible, the great Husbandman that hath planted Heaven and Earth, and gives Sap and Nourishment to all his Creatures, is with her, and within her, and that that Sun of Righteousness is continually warming her with his lively beams? Have you not seen a stone thrown into the Air, make all the haste it can, to return to its Center? So whenever such a Soul is jostled out of her Orb, either by the World, or the Devil, God, that lives in her, forces her to return presently to her Center; even to that God, in whom she hath all that infinite Goodness promises, or infinite Perfection can pay.

no *Fear the Lord all ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him, saith David, Psalm 34. 9.* The Soul that fears him from a sense of his Omnipresence, is that Soul, that can lack nothing, for it can lack no strength to arrive to the highest degrees of Holiness, it is capable of; for this sense will call it away from all absurd, and indecent Actions, will not suffer her to fall into sin; and like the hands of Angels, preserve her Foot from running against a stone, as a large spreading Oak, deeply

deeply rooted in the Earth, mocks the rage of Winds; so a Soul, in whom this Sense is fixed, can sing securely, under all the out-<sup>καθ'λα-
σόν.</sup>rages of Hellish Furies. *My Flesh trembles for fear of thee*; so we read *Psal.* 119. 120. ⁷⁰⁰ The *Septuagint* render it *Fix or Nail my Flesh with thy Fear*, because the *Hebrew* Word signifies both; and the Word thus taken, is very emphatical; for as the Man, whose Hands and Feet, and Body are nailed to a Tree, can stir no where; so he that lives in a mighty Sense of the Almighty's presence, dares not stir from the straight way, or from the Paths of Righteousness: such a Man thinks himself obliged to work out his Salvation with fear and trembling; and when Flesh and Blood would have him to be angry, or laugh at a Sin, or defile himself in secret, he dares not; how can I commit this Wickedness, and Sin against God, with he, for God sees me? Where this Sense is, there Envy must be gone, love of Money must take its leave, and depart, Wrath and Malice dares not stay, Lust, and sinful Concupiscence must dye, and all irrational Passions most expire; This makes the *Herb of Grace* culminate, and spread its wholesome leaves; this makes the Art of Praying easy, and draws forth streams of Tears. By neglect of this Sense the World was lost, and by this Sense the World must be recover'd. See, though she had the understanding of

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an Angel, yet at that time when she eat the forbidden Fruit, she look'd not upon the God, that bid her shun the Tree, and so she fell. By looking on God where-ever we are, we enter into a *Tower* which Enemies may besiege, but cannot take, or batter. In this Word, the most effectual means, either to obtain or keep, or to recover the Grace of God, is this Sense of God's Omnipresence. This is a Lanthorn to our Feet, and a Light unto our Paths; and like Fire thrown in a hedge of Reeds, burns up the evil Thoughts that do annoy us; so that the Man in *Pelagius* was certainly in the right, whose Motto to it was, that looking upon God, in all Places, and all Companies, and remembering his Presence, is as necessary, as our Breathing or the Blood that circulates in our Veins.

The Prayer.

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me; thou knowest my down-falling and my up-rising; thou understandest my Thoughts afar off; thou compassedst my Path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my Ways. I beseech thee overawe me with thy Presence. O that thou wert in all my Thoughts! O how sweet, how delightful, how glorious art thou! Could I always think of thee, how poor would the World, and all things in it, seem in mine Eyes! For thou

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Thou art fairer than the Children of Men!
And all the Excellencies and Perfections that
are found in the Creature, are most eminent-
ly concentred in thee; for thou madest them,
thou maintainest them, thou preservest them,
and thou art the Spring, the Fountain from
which all those lesser Rivers flow. Thou art
right, amiable, charming to a miracle; and
in thee is all that Reason can wish, and the
Understanding can desire! And did I look up-
on thee more, I should be so delighted with thy
Beauty, that sin would be loathsome to me. I
sin against thee, because I lose the sight of thee.
The Eye of my understanding was given me
for purpose to look upon thee! O let me use it
to that end! When I am loth to look upon
thee, Lord, press thou into my Thoughts that
I may not be able to shake off thy Presence.
If I see thee, I shall not dare to offend thee:
Who would offend so dear a Friend, if he
looks upon him? When any sin would insin-
uate into my Affections, O call to me and say,
Thy God is here, and that charming Name
will withhold me from those crooked Ways. I
will remember, Lord, when my Flesh hath some-
times prevailed with me to transgress thy
known Laws, I have been forced to banish
thee from my Mind, before I could act a-
gainst thee. Henceforward be thou ever
with me. Let no base Objects intervene be-
twixt my sight and thy glorious Self; or if
they do, help me to look off, and to return

to my center. Make strong Impressions of the Omniscience and Omnipresence upon my Heart, that no sensual Object, no pleasing Temptation, no Deceit, no Flattery, may rob me of my integrity. At the brightness of thy presence let all mine Enemies vanish and be thou my Conqueror, my Triumph, my Beauty and my Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XIII. Exercise.

To do all things to God's Glory; An Exercise commanded, 1 Cor. 10. 31. Colos. 3. 17. Ephes. 5. 20. 1 Thes. 4. 18. When I say all things, I totally exclude all sinful Actions, for no man can intentionally commend Sin to God's Glory. God indeed will glorify his Justice one day in the Sinners Condemnation; and the perverse Transgressors who will not glorify God now, as God shall hear the Saints one day admire, and adore him for his just Proceedings against obstinate Offenders; and God many times from a great Sinner makes an admirable Convert, but this does not justify a Man's sinning to God's Glory. He that sins, sins to God's dishonour, and the man that transgresses his Commands, seeks to bring a disparagement on the most spotless Being. But, by all things I mean all Actions that have a Natural or Moral Goodness in them; and the

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Exercise consists, 1. In giving thanks for every Blessing we enjoy. 2. In doing all things whether Civil or Religious, with a good and holy design, or with an intent to promote God's Glory.

1. In giving Thanks for every Blessing we enjoy. By every Blessing, I do not mean every individual Blessing, great and small, for there is not one moment of our Lives without instances of God's blessings, but every remarkable mercy, and tho' a habitual gratitude is necessary for all, yet an actual is required in all such as have some marks of eminency upon them. He that is not sensible of the great necessity of this Exercise, hath never heard of what *Moses*, *David*, *St. Paul*, and the whole Army of Saints have done, and he that knows not what it means, hath certainly forgot the end of his coming into the World, and the design of Religion. Not to give God thanks for the Blessings we possess is to be a Beast, nay worse than a Beast, for the very *Dragons praise God in their kind*, as we read, *Psalms 148. 7*. And yet to thank him without consideration of what we do, adds nothing to our happiness, no more than a Parrot repeating some words out of a Psalm, makes him any whit the more Rational. To give God thanks requires attention of the Mind, and the Man that praises him must seriously break forth into Astonishments

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at his Goodness. To say, I thank God, and not to feel what I say is an argument of Carelessness, and there cannot be a greater sign of Stupidity than to commend his Goodness, and not to mind what I mean by the Expression. It is a sense of mine own unworthiness must force those praises from me, and a foresight of my own demerit oblige me to high and noble thoughts of my Great Benefactor. Every Blessing must lift up my Heart to Heaven, and every Mercy I receive must make the Soul adore the hand that sent it. If my Lips be only employed in the Exercise I offer indeed the Calves of my Lips, but continue a stranger to that Living Sacrifice I am to bring, which is my reasonable Service. Not to praise God for his Blessings, with admiration of his Bounty, is as bad as to be dumb in his Celebrations; and there is little difference between him that says nothing and him that speaks like a Man unconcerned. He that in his Blessings reflects only on the Second Causes, whereby it was procured, robs God of his Honour; and to ascribe any Mercy to mine own Wisdom or Industry, or Friends, is no less than Sacrilege. Nay, if I spend the Blessing, which was given me to do good with, upon mine own Lust, I am perfidious; and if instead of putting it to those uses, for which God designed it, I make it serve me in my sins, I am so unfaithful a Steward,

ward, that I am not fit to be received into Everlasting Habitations. I must see God in every Blessing, and take notice of his Gracious Providence in the Dispensation. I must not feed on it as Beasts upon Grass, without regard to him that made it grow; and indeed, I cannot put a greater affront in this case upon the Almighty, than by not considering the operations of his hand. Every Blessing hath the stamp of God upon it; it bears his Image and Superscription, and therefore it is injurious not to give to God the things that are God's. To prize the various Blessings of God I must consider and take notice, how my wants and necessities are supplied, and when I see wherein I do excel others, I cannot possibly want matter of suitable Gratitude.

But 2^{dly}, The greater part of the *Exercise* is yet behind, and that is, *To do all things, whether Civil or Religious, with a good and holy design, and with an intent to promote God's Glory.* This is a Work which few do mind, and even many of those that seem to do more than others are defective in this Duty. I do not deny but that a Man may lawfully have two ends in every action, a Spiritual and a Temporal, but the Spiritual end must be my chief end; and that which must be the principal motive to such work must be a prospect of doing good, or being serviceable to God's Glory. I must
Preach

Preach and Pray, and sing Psalms, to God's Glory, and drink, and eat, and lie down, and sleep, and visit, and discourse, and follow the works of my lawful Calling to God's Glory : When I eat and drink, I must not do it to please my Appetite so much as to be more serviceable to my Master in Heaven ; when I visit I must have a design of Edification in it, and must resolve to drop some savoury discourse in the place I go to. When I am going to take my rest it must not be with an intent merely to Sleep, and to refresh my Body, but chiefly with an intent to be the better able to do my Master's Work ; When I enter upon the works of my Calling, my design must be more to please God, and to obey his Will, than to provide for the ease and satisfaction of my Flesh : When I rise in the Morning, I must rise with an intent to spend that day for Eternity, and whatever I do, I must do it more to please God than to please my self ; but above all, my Religious Duties must have no other design but that God may be glorified by them, and that his Name may be advanced ; and his Honour spread, must be the great end of all my Alms and Supplications. *Christ's* Interest must be my chiefest Interest, and I am no compleat Christian till God becomes all in all to me. To be a favourite of Heaven this must be my Motto, *To me to live is Christ* : and I must

not

not only say so, but say it with that seriousness, that I may be able to call God to witness that it is so. And tho at every bit I eat, I cannot, and need not say, I will eat this for God, yet it's possible to mind this great end in every solemn Action, and when I sit down to eat, to intend some Glory to God suitable to the occasion.

There is nothing makes a greater alteration in our Duties than the Design, and many a Religious performance would certainly be accepted in Heaven if the Design were Great and Noble. Worldly designs prevail too often, even in the severest duties; and nothing spoiled the *Pharisees* Austerity so much as the ill end they had in them. It was the Design that made that vast difference between the Offerings of *Cain*, and *Abel*, *Abel's* Sacrifice being accompanied with Poverty of Spirit, with a Heart sensible of the Greatness and Goodness of God, and willing to express its gratitude to the Father of Light, from whom every good and perfect gift descends, God vouchsafed it a gracious look; whereas *Cain's* Offerings proceeding either from force or custom, or from complaisance to his Father's command, was scorned or undervalued.

God's Glory is best sought by self-contempt, and the only way to exalt our Maker is to vilify our selves; the viler a Man makes himself in his own Eyes the clearer sight

fight he gets of God's Greatness ; and he that looks upon himself as despicable dust and ashes is most likely to behold the brightness of that God that made him. They say that a Vessel that hath ashes in it will hold as much Water as it would if there was no ashes in it ; whereas if other things should be put into the Vessel it would hold the less quantity of Water. So contempt of myself will not keep out my exaltation of God's Glory, nor my sitting in the dust obscure the splendor of my dear Redeemer. A Tree hath Boughs that emulate the height of Heaven, as well as Roots that sink deep into the Ground ; and the deeper the Root lies, the loftier commonly are the Branches : So that he that aims at his own Abasement, at the same time doth what he can, to magnify the Gracious Author of his Being. None deserves Glory, so much as he that wants nothing ; and there is not a better Argument that he deserves it, than this, that he doth not need it. He that Glorifies God, to whom it is no Advantage, doth most of all advantage himself ; and he that gives all Honour to God, and none to himself, gets more by it than the most Ambitious Prince that engrosses all the Glory he can to his own Atchievements.

God's Glory and my Profit are Sisters, and while I am not sparing in promoting the former the other comes in course. God makes

makes nothing for his Glory but what is also profitable unto Man, and Man's Emolument is so link'd together with God's Glory, that to seek to part them is to attempt to part Fire and Heat, for the one is the necessary effect of the other. As God can do nothing against his Glory, so his Perfection and Goodness do so necessarily go together, that as the one challenges the Creature's giving him all the Glory, so the other cannot but work for the Creature's happiness.

Indeed, that is only profitable to man, which brings Glory to God, and the only way to mind our Profit is to endeavour after that, which may advance God's Glory. That man is idle, and a superfluous Creature in the World that doth not seek God's Glory; for this was the use, the great use for which he was made a little lower than the Angels; and if a man's profitableness be to be guessed from the end he was made for, if he declines from that end, he is altogether useless, and scarcely deserves the name of a Creature. The very being of a man imports a necessity of his advancing God's Glory, and he that doth not study to advance it is more senceless than the man that seeks to warm himself with snow, or the Painter that attempts to draw a Picture with a Saw of Iron; we lose our selves if we seek not God's Glory, and we consider
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not what we do if we do not so manage the Creatures, as to make them conducive to God's Glory. All the Riches and Treasures of this World can do no good except I glorify God with them, and indeed I must count them all dross and dung, if I will not make them instrumental to advance God's Glory. Whatever I think, or speak, or do, must be dedicated to God's Glory, at least that must be my general end; and I cannot honour my self better, than by giving God the Honour due unto his Name. It is a mighty Privilege, that God will give me leave to advance his Glory, and I know not how great a favour God intends me, when he bids me to do all things in the Name of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, giving thanks unto God, and the Father through him. It is a Dignity, which the duller sort of Mankind are not aware of, and were their eyes clearer they would strive who should exceed the other in magnifying infinite Goodness.

If I aim at God's Glory in all things I cannot be impatient in Adversity, for as I have reason to believe that even my Crosses will advance God's Glory, so I must glorify God in them, by laying my hand upon my mouth, and acknowledging him just in sending the affliction, and magnifying his Mercy in that he did not send a greater. If I must not seek things pleasant and profitable, but only as they may tend to God's Glory.

Glory, I dare not grumble under my Cross, for I know not but I may glorify God more by the Affliction, than by Prosperity. The Traveller that enquires for his way, is not concern'd, whether Men bid him go this way, or that way, over the Plain, or through Wood, but goes as he is directed; and as long as God directs me to seek, and advance his Glory, it's no great matter, whether the way that leads to it be smooth, or uneasy, clean or dirty, so it doth but lead me to the Mark I am to aim at. The Patient desires Health, but cares not how he comes by it, whether by bitter Potions, or be sweetened Cordials; and I do not really seek God's Glory, except I am indifferent whether I advance it by Riches, or by Poverty, good or evil Report. The way I must leave to God, and whether the Sea be rough or smooth, what I must commit to his Wise Providence, all my Care must only be to arrive at the intended Harbour.

This is it, what Christ means, by bidding us take care, that *our Eye may be single*, Matth. 6. 22. it must aim at one Thing only, *viz.* God's Glory, if it looks upon more objects at once, it confounds itself, and the Man that makes use of it. There cannot be a nobler mark, than this, and there is nothing more proper for our great, and lofty Souls, than this Employment. This is to be with *Jesus* about our Father's Business, and

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and to mind the end, for which we came into the World. This is to conform to God and to be workers together with him in the enlarging of his Kingdom. This is it, we pray for in the famous Prayer, *Thy Kingdom come*, and we then live according to our Prayer, when the advancement of the Kingdom is not the least part of our Endeavours. This is to glory *in the Lord*; and there can be no greater Commendation than that we seek to bring all back again to the Spring, or Fountain, from which they had their Being. God took more Care and Pains, about creating Man, than he did about other Creatures, and whereas he spoke the Universe into being, about Man he consulted and deliberates, how to make him after his own Image. And since God's Perfection consists in glorifying himself, Man can be Man no longer, for he can be God's Image no longer, if he doth not with all his might promote his Creator's Glory.

This is to make Religion the Darling of our Souls, and he answers the great desire of his Maker, who takes care that God may be in all his Thoughts. He that doth so shews that he delights in God, and that God hath engrossed his chiefest Joy. Then delight in God is come to a just pitch, when the Soul is thus greedy to advance God's Glory, and then the Mind doth truly taste how sweet, and gracious the Lord is, when God

God's Honour becomes an ingredient of all
his designs and purposes.

Take the Wings of the Morning, O my
soul, and fly away, that thou may'st be at
rest, and think how thy God hath honour'd
thee; how studious hath God been of thy
glory! How hath he honoured thee, by
making thee an Angelical Substance, sublime
and capable of soaring above this transitory
World! How hath he honoured thee by put-
ting all things under thy Feet, and by ma-
king thee capable to converse with him to
all Eternity! How hath he honoured thee,
that he would not trust his Angels with the
Charge of making thee, but would frame
thee with his own Hands, and breathe the
Breath of Life into thee! How hath he ho-
noured thee by providing so Glorious a Pa-
lace, as this lower World for thy Residence,
and by promising thee a nobler Building made
without Hands Eternal in the Heavens! How
hath he honoured thee, in that he hath
charged his Angels to guard thee in thy go-
ing out, and in thy coming in! Nay, how
hath he honoured thee, in that he hath not
pared his own Son, but hath delivered him
up to be sacrificed for thy Sin, that thou
might'st be capable of being exalted from
Earth to Heaven! How hath he honoured
thee by taking Notice of thy Prayers, and
Alms, and holy Labours, and by rewarding
of them with Blessings great and wonderful,
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and such as thou durst not have aspired to had not his Bounty prompted him to such Liberality ! Hath God so honoured thee and art not thou obliged to seek his Glory ! Hath he glorified thee, and is he willing to give thee greater Glory, and wilt thou think much of glorifying him ? Behold thy Dignity, behold the Honour God hath laid upon thee, and be ashamed of thy great neglect of seeking his Glory ! Get up once more, and purify thy self. Learn to love him dearly, learn to see him in all things and then thou wilt long for his goodness seek his Praise, breathe nothing but his Honour, and be zealous for his Glory.

The Prayer.

O God, who is like unto thee, glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders ! Thy glory is the end of all created Beings. Thou art deck'd with Beauty and Glory, glorious is thy Name, and to glorify thee is not only our Duty but our Glory and Interest too. O let my heart be touched with a sense of thy glory. O let me admire the glory of thy Kingdom. If thou wouldst vouchsafe to display thy glory in my benighted Soul, how should I despise this miserable World ! How should I scorn the lust of the Eye, and the lust of the Flesh, and the pride of Life ! I have talked of thy glory

but oh! how little have I aimed at it in my Actions! What base and sinister ends and designs have I had, even in my Devotions and religious Services! O Father of Mercy purify my Intentions, rectify my Designs, give me a right aim in all things. I am sent into the world to advance thy Glory. O let it not be said that I sought my own Glory! How great is thy goodness that thou wilt employ so wretched a Creature in promoting thy Glory, who canst live without me, and be happy and glorious without me! O glorify my Soul, that I may glorify thee. In all the Blessings, in all the Mercies I enjoy, let me give thee all the glory. What have I that I have not received? Why then should I glory as if I had not received it? O let me study how I may do good in my Generation. Let the Spirit of Glory and of Christ rest upon me! O Father of Glory, let me see what is the Glory of thine Inheritance. Open thou my Lips, O Lord, and my Mouth shall shew forth thy Praise. Guide me by thy Counsel here, and hereafter receive me into Glory. O that this Heart of mine were more spiritualised. It is carnal, sensual, taken with the gayeties of this Life. It admires thee not. It doth not esteem thee above all Treasures, and therefore I do not seek thy Glory as I ought to do. Therefore I evade the Obligation, and pretend that I have no Parts, no Abilities to advance thy
S 2 Glory

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Glory in this present world. O wretched Creature that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death ! Lord speak the word, and deliver me from my self. Assure me that the degrees of future Glory will be proportioned to the degrees of my advancing thy Glory here. O let me abound in good Works, and let doing good be my greatest delight, for as much as I know my labour is not in vain in the Lord. Thou hast promised it, and thou wilt do it. I believe, Lord, help mine Unbelief, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XIV. Exercise.

*To stir up, and to Exercise our Graces as we have occasion, and to grow stronger in the Grace of God ; an Exercise commanded, 2 Tim. 1. 6. 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7, 8. 2 Pet. 3. 18. 1 Thess. 3. 12. 1 Thess. 4. 1. By this Exercise I do not only mean when we are tempted to any Sin, to practise the contrary Virtue, a Subject whereof I have already discoursed in the *Eleventh Exercise* ; but become eminent in those Virtues the seeds whereof lie scattered in our Souls. it's not enough now and then to venture upon a single virtuous act, but the virtue must become habitual to us, natural and easy, and we must learn to harden it into immobility.*

My Faith must not only engage me to Praying and Hearing, but must advance me

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into readines to dye with all Martyrs for the
least Article the Church hath taught me,
upon the Authority of God's Word; it must
raise my Soul to a transcendent love to the
Law of God, to an insatiable hungry and
thirsting after him, to a mighty delight in
his Prefence, to a sacred Grief in his Absence,
and to resolutions to seal the Truth of God
with my own Blood. My *Hope* must not on-
ly make me have a good apprehension of
God's Power and Clemency, but must force
me to repose all my Concerns on his holy
Providence, make me pray with fervour,
and incessantly, and lead me on to trust him
in most desperate plunges, make me ashamed
to think, that a Patient should trust his Health
with a Physician, the Covetous his Estate
with a Lawyer, the Blind his Life with a
Child, or Dog, and that I should not trust
my self to the Bounty and Conduct of him
that hath done all things well, that defends
all Creatures even to the Snail, and the
least root of Grass, defends Serpents and
Crows, and showers down Blessings on his
Enemies, and therefore cannot be supposed
to forsake those that hope in him.

My *Patience* must not only extend to such
Wrongs and Injuries as do not blemish
much either by Fortue or Reputation, but
I must so exercise this noble Virtue, that I
may learn to bear and weather far greater
blows, even the Censures of good men, and

the contradictions of such, as are Persons of Credit and Interest; this grace must be so cultivated, that I may no longer call Afflictions miseries, but donatives of mercy, gifts that come from my dearest Friend, God that means to conduct me to my happiness, I must get up to a higher form in this School, and learn that I am a Christian, not to be Rich and Pompous, and take my pleasure in the World (God need not have descended and shed tears and blood, and given Precepts for this) but to bear the Cross, and to become conformable to the Sufferings of *Jesus*. In a word, I must learn to fear nothing so much as that God will give over afflicting me.

My *Meekness* must not only teach me to be gentle to great men, but I must so improve it, that it may appear to all that converse with me; and I must learn to be meek even to those which I have power over, to those which are under my Charge, and whom I could by stripes and threatnings force into respect and obedience; and when Justice and Conscience oblige me to punish, even in that Punishment, my mildness must be seen. I must learn to be a Lamb, and to imitate the softness of Wool; for nothing appeases the angry Elephant, as the meekness of the former, and nothing resists the fury of Cannon-shot, like the softness of the other. I must not give over, till I have brought

brought myself to a Temper, whereby my Passions may be calm and quiet and serene, while those about me, and who chide me, and are angry with me, make a fearful Noise, and are transported with indignation.

My *Self-resignation* may possibly serve me to leave my self to the Will and Direction of God in the enjoyment of moderate Prosperity ; but here I must not rest, but advance this Virtue to a far higher Pitch, that, come what will, whether Weakness, Feebleness, or Lameness, or Agues, or Fevers, or Consumptions, or Falling-sickness, or the Stone, or the Gout, or Poverty, or Nakedness, or Contempt, or loss of Friends, or loss of Father, Mother, Children, Sisters, Brothers, Relations, Benefactors, Money, Lands, Houses, &c. I may conform entirely to the Will of God.

My *Obedience* may lead me to do several things God hath commanded, but I must drive it farther, and learn to obey him readily, humbly, chearfully, universally, indefatigably, learn to obey him in things that cross my Inclination, my Temper, or my sensual Appetite, that are against my Profit, my Temporal Interest, my Honour, and my natural Desires, without disputing, evading, or perverting his Commands, and though I apprehend not the reason of his Commands.

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My *Modesty* may oblige me to bashfulness in asking, but I must exercise it into greater Perfection, till I hate detraction, shun contention, avoid boasting, keep Secrets committed to my Breast, fly idleness, watch against imprudence, strive against irreverence, and forbear censoriousness.

My *Temperance* may make me cautious and afraid of eating or drinking more than Nature requires; but this is not the only Effect it must work in me, but it must teach and oblige me to go on and avoid curiosity in Diet, Cloaths, and Furniture, and bring me to Self-denial in Sleep, Recreations, Words, Gestures, to ruling of my Affections, and to purifying of my Thoughts, and Imaginations.

My *Moderation* is not come yet to its full Growth, while I do no more than fear overvaluing sublunary comforts beyond their intrinsic Worth, and the end for which God doth allow them; but I must make the Vertue larger, it must grow in me like the Lillies, and spread its Branches, as the Cedars of *Lebanon*. I must learn to keep my delight and mirth in outward Enjoyments, within bounds. I must learn to moderate my Grief, when they are taken away; in a Word, weep as if I wept not, rejoyce as though I rejoyced not, and buy as though I possessed not, and use the World, as if I used it not. I must learn to be moderate in

my Contests with my Neighbour, moderate in my Censures, moderate in my Passions, moderate in my Principles, moderate in my Judgement, moderate in Disputes about Religion.

My *Love to God* is but weak, if I only stand up to vindicate his Word and holy Oracles, assert their Divinity, and their Truth, but I must blow the Fire into Flames, learn to embrace mean and painful Things for God, to bear incommodities in Duties with Patience, to be undiscouraged in successful Labours, root out Vice, and plant Vertue in all that depend upon me. My Love must be so exercised, till God becomes the Life of my Soul, the light of mine Eyes, and 'till I can say, Lord here I am, send me, give me Grace to do what thou dost command, and then command what thou wilt. *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine; let him kiss me with the Kisses of his Lips, for his Love is better than Wine.* O, my Love, my Life, my Desire, my Delight my Riches, my Treasure, my All, my Happiness, my Hope, my Comfort, my Beginning, my End, too late have I known thee, too late have I loved thee, O that I had loved thee sooner!

My *Charity* to my Neighbour is but in its infancy, while I am only civil and respectful to him without prejudicing myself, but it must be exercised, 'till it grows large and

and diffusive ; it must extend to his Soul, as well as to his Body, teach me to be tender of his Credit, compassionate in his Calamities, helpful in his distress, it must constrain me to rejoyce at his Prosperity, to admonish him to Holiness, to encourage him to good Works, and to forgive him, even as I hope to be forgiven in the Day of our Lord Jesus.

My *Repentance* must not only fill me with melancholly Thoughts about another Life, nor teach me only to suppress the Sins I have been guilty of ; but I must learn to strike at the Root of my Corruptions ; it must elevate my Soul, and make it fruitful in all good Works, and I must learn to hate Sin, as much as I loved it before, and to answer my degrees of Sin, with my Degrees of Contrition, and my measure of Vanity, with my measure of Sanctification and Righteousness.

To *Redeem the time*, I must not only spend some Hours in private Devotion, but I must learn to improve Opportunities, whereby my better part may be exalted. I must be afraid of allowing myself in idleness, and be careful to do that which is worth spending my time in. To be sure I must not spend it in Sin, and needless Satisfaction of the Flesh, but be content to part with vain Thoughts and Projects, to rise early if my Strength will permit, to be industrious in my

my Calling, to season my natural and civil Acts, and the Works of my Profession with holy Contemplations, to remember what will stand me in most stead after Death, and so to number my Days, that I may apply my Heart unto Wisdom, even unto that Wisdom, which consists in knowing and doing the Will of God, in procuring Peace, and Pardon, in mortification of my Lusts, and in conformity to *Christ's* Example.

Then I exercise all these Graces when I work them into greater solidity; of feeble make them lusty and vigorous, and of fickle and uncertain make them fixed, constant, and immovable, 'till I come to abound in the work of the Lord *Jesus*; and into this Strength and Glory they may be wrought by the assistance of God's Free and Generous Spirit, who is nigh unto them that call upon him, unto all such as call upon him in Truth. I dislike not the Practice of some Christians, that do exercise some particular Grace more than the rest, and render themselves eminent in it, and make it their chief Business to be ready, prompt, and accurate in it, as *Gregory the Great*, whose excellency lay in entertaining Strangers; as the pious *Lucius of France*, who took great delight in visiting Hospitals, and serving the Sick with his own Hands; as *Tobit* whose Talent lay chiefly in burying the Dead out of Charity; or as that Lady *Cassian* speaks of,

Psal. 145

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Tobit 1.

17.

*Cassian.**cell t. 18.**c. 14.*

of, who took into her House a wayward
troublesome, peevish, cholerick, poor Widow, that she might become eminent in Patience. Such Exercises I confess are great and noble, and besit the Holiness of a Christian ; but yet one particular Grace must not be exercised to the decay of the rest, or with secret hopes, that God who sees us laborious in one Vertue, will dispense with our neglect of others. I am sensible it is with Grace as it is with Nature, and some Graces as some Actions are more suitable to our Inclinations than others, not but that we are obliged to love and embrace all, but some our Affections are more violently carried out after, than others ; as a Father though he is kind to all his Children, yet by some secret Instinct or Propensity hath a more tender Affection to one than to another and without all peradventure it is a laudable and commendable thing, to be industrious in any gracious Work, and Religious Action, but though our Inclinations may lawfully be eager after one particular Grace, the rest also must be duly exercised, and fortified into habit, and a second Nature as we have reason to suspect, that that seemingly holy Fruit is not a Plant of our heavenly Father's planting, who disperses influences and assistances sufficient for the growth of every Grace and improvement of every Vertue in the Soul, and consequently justly expects

ects that his Vineyard should bring forth
sweet Grapes, not some sour and some
sweet, but all sweet, and all pleasing to a
spiritual Palate and Appetite.

Of the necessity of this Exercise none
can doubt, that doth but take pains to read
over the several Parables of the Gospel,
wherein Grace is compared to Seed, and sure
no Gardiner or Husbandman ever threw Seed
into the Ground, but took care that it might
grow and advance into a Blade, next into an
Ear, and in the end into ripe Corn: All the
Exhortations, all the Admonitions, all the
Counsels in Scripture to *Stedfastness, and a-
vancing, and increasing, and going on to per-
fection*, do with one Mouth, and with one
Voice, proclaim the necessity of this Exercise.
And O *Christians*! if you would know what
it is to recover the great loss you had in *A-
dam* this Exercise will be your Schoolmaster;
this will in some measure bring you up to
that Innocence and Perfection he enjoy'd in
Paradise; this will re-entitle you to that I-
mage of God, in which he was at first created;
this will make the Divine Character which
Sin hath blotted legible again; this will
make the Divine Nature flourish in you again,
make your Faces shine like that of *Moses*,
when he descended from the Mount; this
will set a beauty on your Souls, fit for God
to be enamour'd withal; by this you will be
able to guess at the Glory of the first Crea-
tion,

tion, and what wonderful Creatures your first Father and Mother were, before the fatal Tree become a snare to their Appetite. This will make you fit company for your Head *Christ Jesus*, who therefore gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers, even for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; for indeed this is growing up unto him in all things, from whom the whole body is joyn'd together, and compacted by that which every joyn't supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, make increase in the Body, unto the edifying of it self in love, Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13. 15.

The Prayer.

O God, thou art a strong Rock, and a strong Habitation! How excellent is thy loving kindness, therefore the Children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy Wings! O my God, how have I contented myself with very low degrees of Vertue! I have been afraid of doing too much for Heaven, and satisfied myself too often with shadows of Goodness! Thou art not wanting to us, if we are not wanting to our selves. Thou art

art ready to quicken us, ready to enlighten
us, ready to succour us in all our distresses
and necessities. O thou that art a strong
tower to all them that run unto thee. Take
care of my immortal Soul if thou wilt charge
thyself with her welfare, and I shall be safe.
I have been very slothful hitherto. I have
lost much time, many opportunities, many
advantages of a Spiritual Life. I know I
must grow on to a perfect man in Christ Je-
sus. Thou dost not allow me to stand still!
Thou biddest me to work like a man that
knows what an endless Glory means. O pu-
rify me from all sin. Lord Jesu! give me
the fervor of thy Spirit, that I may be filled
with spiritual Wisdom and Understanding;
and for the Glory set before me, make me to
be content to do and to suffer cheerfully what-
ever in thy Wisdom thou shalt think fit to
charge me with. Come Lord! make a Re-
formation in this poor, blind, miserable Soul;
my Faith is weak, my Hope is weak, my
Love is weak, my Charity is weak. One
word of thy mouth would put vigour and life
into me. The same Word that made the
Sun shine out in the first Creation would
make my Graces bright, and that Sentence,
Let there be Light, spoken to my Soul, would
change the dark Chaos into a Globe of light.
O make goodness habitual in my Soul. O
that it might be an everlasting Inhabitant
in me! Oh that my Soul might become its
proper

proper Seat, its Palace, its Tabernacle from which it might never depart ! O ! how inconstant is my Zeal ; Hot I am to day and cold to morrow. Sometime I seem to lay force on the everlasting Kingdom, a little while after I fall in love again with the world. O destroy this weed of Inconstancy in my Garden. All this comes from the weakness of my Vertues. Hence it is, that I am not the same every where : And I that am bold in one place to stand up for thy Glory am a Coward in another. Where is thy mighty Arm, O Lord, where are thy Bowels ! Fill my languishing Soul with strength and wisdom from above, that I may encrease and abound more and more in love. Perfect what thou hast begun in me. Let Meekness and Humility, and all the Graces of the Holy Ghost become natural to me. O that they were incorporated with my Temper ! O that they were so riveted into my Soul, that I might not be able to act contrary to them. O that I might find as great a reluctancy when I am tempted to neglect them, as formerly I found when thy Spirit commanded me to perform them ! O how sweet a frame do these Graces put the Soul into ! O that I could say, that thus it is with me ! Sweet Jesu, be not tired with taking pains with this miserable Soul ! Thou hast been prodigiously kind to me, O be not weary of being farther gracious and favourable ! O let me find

and by blessed experience, that I grow in
grace, and that thy Commandments are no
longer grievous to me, that every thing in thy
service was become more easy, and that what
formerly was a Burden to me, is now pure
pleasure and Delight to my Soul. O my
God, gild my Soul once more with thy radi-
ant Beams, and establish my Heart unblame-
able in Holiness unto the coming of our Lord
Jesus Christ. Amen.

Exercise XV.

Every Night before we go to Bed, to call
ourselves to an account for the Actions of the
Day, and examine our Hearts and Lives,
how we have discharged our Duty toward
God, and toward Man; An Exercise com-
manded Psal. 4. 4. Cor. 13. 5 Jerem. 8. 6.
This Exercise is the life of all the rest; and
the great reason why men make no greater
progress in Goodness, is, because they do
not study and search their own Lives and
Actions. How should we know what good
we ought to do, except we examine what
evil we commit. The Merchant at night
casts up his gains of the day, and if he finds
he hath lost more than he hath gained, he
seeks to recover it with the first opportunity.
It's a wonderful thing we should examine
our Servants about trifles and inconsiderable
matters, and leave our selves, about whom

Perf. sat.
4. Ut nemo
in sese ten-
tat descen-
dere nemo?
Sed prace-
denti spe-
ctatur
mantica
tergo.

T

Heaven

Heaven and Earth are concerned, unexamined. A man tries the Oxen he hath bought, whether they be strong to labour or no, and his Horses, whether they will do him service or no, and sees whether he hath all his Sheep, and whether none of his Cattle be lost; and shall we be such Enemies to our own Souls, as not to see what condition they are in?

No man can be a good man that neglects this Exercise, for every good man must be cautious of offending God; but how can any man be cautious of offending him that doth not search and see what it is that doth offend him, and whether his own Actions be not the things that do displease him. Nothing will make a man more cautious than this frequent calling himself to account, and since every rational person that chuses the end, must necessarily chuse the means also that lead to that end; it will unavoidably follow, that he that is a good man, and cautious of offending God, cannot but resolve upon his Self-examination, the great means to arrive at that cautiousness. This was *David's* practice, and long before him *Isaac*, who went every night into the Field to meditate, as we read *Gen.* 24. 63. No doubt, in that Meditation, he reflected on the Actions of the Day, that he might praise God for the particular Assistances and Influences he had felt, and for the

Psal. 119.

59.

Psal. 63. 9

Anton. lib.

10 Sect.

27.

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the future watch against the Errors and Defects he had been guilty of that day.

Men, to whom the Word of God never came, have seen the necessity of this Exercise, and thought they could not be Men without it; and, O my Friends! Can we be Christians without it? It was one of the Canons of the *Pythagorean* Discipline, to call to mind what they had been doing in the day, and sometimes they reflected on what they had done two or three days before. This was the Doctrine and Practice of *Cleobulus*, and of the *Indian* Gymnosophists, who strictly enquired what good they had done in the day time; and how like a Christian doth the noble *Seneca* speak, when he tells his Friend *Novatus*, *The heart must every day be called to an account. So did the brave Sextius before he composed himself to sleep; when day-light was shut in, he asked his Heart, What disease, what distemper of Nature hast thou cured? What sin hast thou withstood? Wherein art thou better? Wrath and Anger will decay and cool, if thus it be called to the Bar every Day; what can be more pleasant than thus to explore the Actions of the whole Day? How soft must that rest be that succeeds this Examination! How sweet, how free, how easy must it be, when the Soul is either commended or admonish'd, and a Man is his own Judge, and turns Critick upon his own*

Laert. lib. S. in Pythag. &c. lib. 1. in Cleob. & Cicer. lib. de Senect. Cael. Rhodig. lib. 11. lect. antiq. c. 1. Senec. de Ira l. 3. c. 36. Animus quotidie ad rationem reddendam vocandus est, &c. Heraclitus interrogatus quid faceret respondit. Ed. Græc. univ. equal. Plutarch. ad Colot. & Julian. de Cynismo Orat. 1.

The Best Exercise.

Life? This Power I use, and every Day I have Pleadings in my Soul, when the Candles are taken away; and my Wife knowing my Custom, hath left me to myself; I dive into the whole Day, and measure my Words and Actions over again; I hide nothing from myself, I pass by nothing that I have said or done, for why should I be afraid of mine own Errors, when I can say to my Heart, take heed, do so no more, I forgive thee at this time. Thus spake the best Tutor of the worst of Princes; and though a Heathen, yet I do not see how a Christian could have deliver'd himself better.

*Rabbi El-
ezer Ben
Jacob in
Mincab.*

It hath been the serious study of Holy Men, what Rules they might prescribe to young beginners in Religion, to subdue their Sins: Some, as *St. Anthony* have advised, to write down the Sins of the Day past every Night, and so to look them over. Others (as *Zenon*) have directed Men to take a Coal of Fire now and then, and hold it to their Fingers, till they feel the pain, and from thence to conclude, what the Tortures of Hell will be. The *Jews* talk like mad Men, when they prate of their *Phylacteries*, as Amulets against Sin, and Preservatives of Virtue. Nothing certainly will do it better, than this daily Self-examination, for this will bring me to a right knowledge of my Sins, set them in order before me, and charge me home, as *Nathan* did the stray-
ing

ing David, thou art the Man. *This Word was rash, that Thought evil, this Action was contrary to the Will of God, that was inconvenient, this savoured of baseness of Spirit, and that of Pride; this Expression was malicious, and that Gesture proceeded from Ill-will and Envy, &c.* Not a few Men are lost, because they will not know, that many of their Actions or Words are sinful, such especially as fit them for converse with vain People, and render them acceptable to careless sensual Company; they are content with a general Confession of their Sins, and flatter themselves, that they have done well enough when they have confessed that they are miserable Sinners. In their Devotions they love to dwell on Generals, and shun coming to particular Offences, as a Malefactor doth Self-accusation. Communing with their own Hearts, would unveil to them the particular Errors of their Lives, and bring them to such a Knowledge of themselves, as would at once instruct and terrify them; and were they once acquainted with their particular Miscarriages, they durst not sin against Knowledge, at least very few would dare to be so bold.

And as this daily Examination would discover to us our particular Offences, so at the same time it would shew us the multiplicity of those particulars, and the multiplicity would fright us from the Commis-

on, and oblige us to take another course : The multiplicity of our Sins would appear so unworthy, so monstrous, so full of ingratitude, that we should be ashamed to own any dependance upon the Almighty, and yet heap Injury upon Injury, and Offence upon Offence : This would make the Body of Sin look much bigger than ordinarily it doth, and the vastness of the Heap would be a discouragement from Sin, as a Load which the Porter cannot lift, frights him from the attempt of carrying it.

This communing with our own Hearts would awaken our Consciences, and they being once awake, would tease, and haunt, and follow us, and not leave us till we resolve to part with the dearest Sins we have ; there is a mighty difference between a Conscience that is asleep or oppressed with Cares and Pleasures of the World, and a Conscience that's broad awake. The Conscience that's hush'd into a slumber, lets the Sinner do any thing he hath a mind to, so much at least, as is consistent with his Honour and Reputation of the World ; it will let him lye, swear, forswear, deceive, dissemble, be angry, &c. without contradicting him ; it will let him go to Bed quietly, eat and drink, and go into Company without Molestation, and though he fancies all the while that his Conscience is at peace with him, yet most certainly it is nothing but stupidity and carnal

carneal security, which will end at last in fearful thundring and lightning; but a Conscience that's awake, will disturb a Man in every Place he comes at, check him if he doth but look awry, represent to him the Mercies and Terrors of the Lord, bid him remember he hath a Soul to be saved, assure him, that as light as such a Sin may seem in other Men's Apprehensions, it cannot but grieve a Holy God, fright him with flashes of Hell-fire, shew him *Tophet* afar off, expostulate with him, how he can so much forget himself, as to displease the most lovely and most amiable Being. This Conscience will do, when it hath shook off the Chains of Slumber, and if this be its Nature, and Self-examination rouzes it, it must needs follow, that this communing with our own Hearts, must be the best preservative against the infection which proves so fatal to the greater part of us.

The use of this Exercise appears to me so necessary, that I cannot forbear enlarging upon it, and giving you what Directions I can for the faithful performance of it; and they are these following.

1. *Let it not be done slightly or superficially*, as careless Servants sweep a Room, leaving half of the Rubbish behind them. Some Christians there are, who being loth to be miserable hereafter, and sensible that Christ must be obeyed in every thing, will

force themselves to do any thing they hear is their Duty; but they do not properly perform the Duty, but only something like it, that their Hearts may not smite them for the total omission. They do it so slovenly, and so overtly, that they had as good have left it undone. The shadow of a Duty is one thing, and the substantial part of it is another, and he that is expert in the former, is not therefore necessarily skill'd in the latter. He that calls himself to an account for the Sins he hath committed, and not for the Neglects he hath been guilty of, doth the work by halves, or he that spends only a few transient Thoughts upon his Actions, and presently interrupts the Task again with some impertinent Business, or takes a careless survey of his Behaviour and Deportment, and mingles Thoughts of the World, or of sensual Pleasure with those Contemplations of himself, shews he hath no Stomach, no Desire, no Appetite to this Spiritual Food, that the World doth yet engross his Desires and Affections, and that he doth not think Heaven worth taking by violence.

2. *When you go about it, go about it willingly and chearfully, not like men that seem angry with God for laying such a yoke upon the neck of his Disciples.* I do not deny but that the Devil and our own Lusts will make Objections against it, plead that it is not necessary, or that hereby our worldly Profit will

will be much obstructed, and that we do not read of many Saints that have used it, and that it is a thing not common, and that we must mind the works of our Calling, and that Sleep will oppress us if we go about this Work at night, &c. The Devil did never yet let any man go quietly to Heaven; and therefore such impediments he will certainly throw in any man's way, that hath serious resolutions not to neglect it; but these objections must be courageously answered, vigorously resisted and manfully opposed; for the strong man will not leave the house except you throw him out by force. He that is afraid of discomposing his soft Lusts and Passions, to be sure can do no good here; and whatever unwillingness may creep or steal upon us in this Exercise, our business must be to strive, and pray, and labour hard against it, and to resolve to cross it whatever it cost us; Suggestions that would make us unwilling to venture must not be dangl'd, courted or flatter'd. No, but must be beaten off with a strong hand, and we must not give over till the Exercise becomes delightful to us; for as it is in the works of Charity, so in this, God ever loves a chearful Giver. To go about this Work as the Ox goes to the Shambles, to be forced, to be dragged to it as an untowardly School-boy to his Book, to scratch our Heads when we are to apply our selves to it, and to be drawn

drawn to it by fears of Hell, and terror within, is with the *Jews*, Mal. 2. 13. *T*
cover the Altar of the Lord with tears and
weeping, and crying out, insomuch, that he
regards not our offering any more, nor re-
ceives it with a good will at our hands.

3. *Let it be done with an intent to be bet-*
ter. Whatever we do in Religion this must
 be our end. He that examines himself at
 night in course, or makes a formality of it
 and hath no real intent to leave, and watch
 against the sins and neglects, which upon
 examination he finds in himself, or to be-
 come more serious, beats the Air, and what
 is worse, mocks the Almighty, and takes his
 Covenant in his Mouth, while he hates to
 be reformed, as it is said *Psal.* 50. 16, 17.
 One would think no man should undertake
 this Task, but with an intent to become more
 cautious of sinning, and more watchful a-
 gainst temptations; yet such is the deceit-
 fulness of our Hearts, that we are apt to
 fancy God likes the Duty and regards not
 the Effect, as the Harlot, *Prov.* 7. 14. *This*
day have I paid my vows, therefore came I
forth to meet thee. She made her Vows
 and Prayers, not the means but the end;
 Means they are indeed whereby God would
 make us holier; but he that rests in the
 means, and goes no farther is like unto a
 man that works in a Garden or Vineyard,
 and rids no ground; Labour is the means
 whereby

whereby the Garden is to be manured and cultivated, that it may bring forth Flowers, Herbs and Plants, and all manner of pleasant Fruits ; He that doth not make this fruitfulness the end of his Labour, takes pains, but does do nothing.

4. *Let it be done with some aggravation of the defects and errors of your Lives, which you detect by examination.* The bare discovery of our neglects or defects, will signify little, except they be represented to our minds in such black Characters as shall work a detestation of them. Being drawn in their native colours, and the offences heightened from circumstances, and the defects compared with the light and knowledge we have, with the encouragements, motives, arguments God is pleased to give us, with the various opportunities we enjoy, with the Parts, Gifts, Abilities the Almighty hath bestowed upon us, they will look more big and dreadful, and consequently the sight will make deeper impressions upon us, and engage us to greater care and circumspection. On the other side, where the Influences, Assistances, Helps and Strength, and Power against any sin or temptation, or any other mercy we have received in the day-time, be heightened and made more lively, by considering our vileness, unworthiness, wretchedness, and how undeserved these Blessings are, how they favour of bowels of compassion,

sion of God's Paternal care, and discover God's unspeakable love to his poor Creatures, and his immense liberality to Wretches that have deserved his anger and fury and indignation; the Heart will be more taken with them, and engaged to a more fervent love of God, and to greater alacrity to run in the way of his Commandments.

5. *Those that have Families let them by all means exhort their Children and Servants to this Exercise; those I mean which are capable of it.* And they are capable of it sooner than we are aware, especially if we entice them to it by Rewards and Promises till Custom hath made it pleasant, and then they will desire our approbation more than our recompence. This is certainly part of that walking within our Houses with a perfect heart, which *David* makes the necessary qualification of a good House-keeper. *Psal. 101. 2.* Goodness is ever communicative, and no man loves God truly that doth not desire others should love him as well as himself. It is the nature of true Devotion to be active, and zealous to make Profelytes, and indeed where the Heart is enamoured with God's beauty and excellency, it is impatient till it brings others into a relish and liking of it. If this Communing with our own Hearts be profitable to our own Souls, why should it not be so to the Souls of Persons committed to our Trust? If we think

necessary to our Salvation shall we think
those under our Charge may find out ano-
ther way to Heaven? If we look upon it as
a sure preservative to guard us against Sin,
shall we leave those whose Souls as well as
bodies we are to provide for, to secure them-
selves against Sin as well as they can? these
are absurdities which a Christian must not
be guilty of, except such Christians as the
Angel of the Church of *Sardis* was, who *had*
name that he liv'd but was dead, Rev. 3. 1.
6. *Take such a method in this daily Self-*
examination as is most easy and natural.
Whether proceed directly to contemplation
of your outward and inward Man, or lay the
Decalogue before you, or make Christ's
Sermon upon the Mount the Rule of this
Exploration. I will touch upon each of
these Methods, and leave it to your discre-
tion to take which you please. Indeed we
should not need to descend to such particu-
lars, had we to deal with men that were in-
love with Religion, and would apply gene-
ral things to themselves, think themselves
concerned in every Lesson that is delivered
in Publick; and when they hear Sinners re-
proved and condemned, cry with the Disci-
ples of our Lord, *Master is it I?* But our
business for the most part being with men,
who, like wanton Children, will scarce eat
the Meat that is cut for them, and are so
choaked with the Cares and Riches, and
Enjoyments

Enjoyments of this World, that the loud Thunders of God make no impression on 'em and fancy, because they are not particularly named in the Bible, that therefore the Commands there given do not belong to them; we are forced to make the way they are to walk in as easy as we can; to remove the Stones, and tell them every step, in hope that all these pains may work upon them and oblige 'em to break loose from the Kingdom of Sin and Darknes. And therefore

1. If the Actions and Motions of our outward and inward, may be made the Rule of this daily Self-examination, the particular questions that must be proposed to our Hearts, at night, must be such as these: To begin with the Senses.

As for the *Ear*; Have not I this day heard some ill, immodesty, unfavory Expressions used by others, and hath it been grief to me, hath it been a trouble to my Soul, to think that my God was abused and dishonoured by it? Have not my Ears been open to corrupt and vain communications? Have not I been tickled with some obscene or filthy story I have heard? Have I heard my Neighbour reviled, or ill spoken of, and have I done the duty of a Friend, and justified his innocent behaviour? Have I heard this day of an undecent deportment of any of my Family, and have I reprov'd them for it, or admonish'd them to amendment of life

se? Have not I been pleased with the commendations I have heard men pass upon me, and hath not their Applause tempted me to vain-glory? Have I heard of Losses I have had with Patience? Have I heard a man speak disgracefully of me without being engaged at the Calumny? Have I heard men entice me to sin, and have I abhorred the invitation? Have I heard men Swear and Curse, and have I been concerned at the greatness of their Sin?

On the Lord's Day especially; Have I heard the Word this day with seriousness? Did I come to hear with Resolutions to practise what I heard? Was my Heart affected with the happy message of Grace and Pardon? Was not I more taken with the Minister's delivery than the great things he spoke of? Was it custom that obliged me to go and hear, or was it a fervent desire to be edified and built up in my most holy Faith? Do I feel in my self any purposes at this present to do as I have been advised to day? Did I prepare my self for hearing the Word by suitable Thoughts and Contemplations of that awful Majesty before whom I was to appear? Did I feel any heat in my Hearing, which was ready to consume the Straw and Stubble of my carnal Affections? Did I find any sweetness in the Word of God I heard to day? Was my Heart ravished when I heard the joyful News of Christ's Redemption

Redemption to day? Was my Soul affected with love of God, when I heard it described to day at the Receiving of the Holy Sacrament? Have I done my duty at home? Have I made my Servants and Children hear what the Lord their God requires at their hands?

As for the *Eye*; Have I this day lifted up mine Eyes to Heaven and taken notice of God's Providences? Have not I fed mine Eyes with some unlawful Spectacle? Have not I seen men sin, and laugh at it? Have not I beheld immodest Actions, and been delighted with them? Hath not the sight of such a Vanity transported me into admiration of it? Have I read a portion of the Holy Scriptures to day, and remembered to apply the things I read of to my own Conscience? Have I been enflamed with the goodness of the men I have read of? Have the Duties and Precepts I have read caused in me a willingness to perform them? Have I beheld the finger of God in the Blessings I have received to day? Have I taken notice of God's Goodness to me and mine, and stood amazed at it? Have I looked upon the Works of God to day, upon Trees, and Herbs, and Flowers, and admired the Wisdom, Glory and Bounty of God?

As for the *Tongue*, and *Lips*; Have I wilfully spoke evil of no man to day? Have not I rendered Railing for Railing, and Threatning for Threatning? Have I been
careful

careful to drop something of God in the company I have been in? Did not I eat and drink to day more to please my Appetite, than to repair the decayed strength of my Nature, that I might be more serviceable to God and my Neighbour? Did I take occasion to speak of something that is good at my Table? And when I craved a Blessing, was not my mind more intent upon the Meat before me, than on the Great God above me? Have not I been intemperate to day? Did not I eat and drink more than Nature required? Have I Pray'd with my Family to Day, and did that Prayer proceed from an humble Sense of our spiritual Wants and Necessities? Have not I said something, whereby my Neighbour might suffer in his Credit and Reputation? Have I dropt never a Lye in my Shop or Trade, or in Company, either in jest, or for some Advantage, or to please Men? Have not I rashly made, or rashly broke a Promise? Have I in my Addresses and Answers shew'd all Meekness unto all Men? Have not I talk'd furly or proudly to a Man because he was Poor? Have not I disdain'd to speak to him, because he went in Rags? Have I avoided foolish Talk, and when I have been tempted to break a Jest, which was either smutty, or might be some way prejudicial to my Neighbour, have I suppressed it, and been more ambi-

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ous of being grave and modest, than of the Reputation of being Witty?

As for the Hands and Feet, whereby the Scripture usually expresses Man's Actions Have I been diligent in the Duties of my Calling to day; Have I defrauded no Man, deceived no Man? Have I dealt uprightly and honestly with all Men? Have I shunn'd that Company, which I was afraid would draw me into Sin? Have not I complied with some sinful Action of the Company I have been in? Have I some way or other shew'd my abhorrency and detestation of their Sins? Have I really endeavour'd more to please God than Men? What good have I done to day? Have not I taken more pains and care to dress my Body, than I have done to beautify my Soul? Have not I been more curious about my Cloaths, than about my Graces? Have not I been more careful to make my Face pleasing to Spectators, than I have been to approve myself to God? Have not I lost somewhat of the Life of Religion by going into such Society? Have not I spent my time in idleness? Have I taken care to spend it for Eternity?

As for the Mind; Have I try'd to dispose my Mind of Evil Thoughts to day? Have I called in Pious and Spiritual Reflections? Have I resisted wandring Thoughts in Prayer? Have not I suffered worldly Thoughts to eat out the Virtue of my Prayers?

ers ? Have I in my Supplications represented to my Mind God's Greatness, Goodness, Majesty and Holiness ? And was I sensible of my spiritual Wants and Necessities all the time ? Have I been much in Holy Ejaculations to Day ? Was God first and last in my Thoughts, when I waked this morning, and went to rest last night ?

As for the Conscience ; Have I made Conscience of the least Sins to day ? Have I conscientiously discharged the Duties of my several Relations ? Have I done as a Person, in such a Relation would and should have done ? Have I made Conscience of doing a thing, which I have either known or feared to be a Sin ? Have not I laugh'd at those Sins I should have mourn'd at ? Have I been concern'd at other men's Sins as well as mine own ?

As for the Passions and Affections ; Have not I given way to the workings of Pride, and Anger to day ? Have not I been angry with my Neighbour without a Cause ? Have not I in a Passion given Men ill Language ? Have not I said that in my Wrath, which now I wish I had not ? Have not I been fiery and hot upon very slight and trivial occasions ? Have not I mistrusted God's Providence ? Have not I been more careful about making provision for the Flesh, than about enriching of my Soul ? Have not I found greater joy in temporal than in spiritual Blessing ?

The Best Exercise.

Blessings? Hath not such a Vanity, such a Present, such a Gift affected, and ravished me more, than the News of God's Grace and Pardon, and the influences of the Holy Ghost? Have I watch'd against Wrath, and Envy, and Malice, and immoderate Grief and carnal Mirth? Have I got ground of such a Corruption? Have I been better to day than yesterday? Have I serv'd God without distraction more to day, than I have formerly?

Such Questions as these you may put to your Hearts, if you mean to take your outward and inward Man into consideration. But then,

2. If you had rather make the *Ten Commandments* your Rule, the account may be taken in this manner. As to the *First Commandment*; have not I this day confided in the Creature more than in the Creator? Have not I been willfully ignorant of some Truth that hath been brought to my Ears? Have not I despised God, by rejecting some Motions of his Holy Spirit? Have not I lived to day like a Man that doth not believe the Promises and Threatnings of God? Have not I doubted of some Truth revealed in the Word of God, or lived as if I had doubted of his Providence? Hath my Faith been lively this day? Did not I sink into carnal Security? Have I exercised my Hope in God? Have I expressed my Love to God to day? Have not I loved some outward

ward thing more than God? Hath not my love to God been in Words only? Hath it discover'd itself in Actions? Have I desired to be at Peace with God, and be united to him more? Have I done nothing that hath favoured of hatred or contempt of God?

As to the *Second Commandment*; Have I feared God to day, and have I feared him more than all the Men I have had to do with? Have I been very cautious of offending him? Have I abhorred the Motion, when I have been tempted to any Evil? Have I obeyed God in sincerity? Hath there been any known Sin that I have not shunn'd, or hath there been any known Duty, which I was not more forward to perform, than to omit? Have not I exalted myself, or thought myself better than my Neighbours? Have I given God all the Glory, and have I spoke very modestly of my self? Have not I been peevish and impatient, under such a Providence, that hath crossed my Designs? Have not I indulged my self in Hypocrisy? Have I been more desirous to be than to seem good? Have I given God that Worship to day, which is due to him? Have I pray'd to him in Truth, and praised him with joyful Lips?

As to the *Third Commandment*; Have not I this day neglected an Opportunity of giving good Counsel and Advice to Men, related to me? Have not I shunn'd discour-

ses of God and Holiness? Have I admired and adored God's Holy Attributes? Have not I broke forth into rash Oaths? Have not I been ashamed of the standing up for the Glory of God's Name? Have I trembled to see God abused? Have I shew'd Courage and Resolution when I have seen or heard my God dishonour'd? Have not I scandalized some Persons by my Actions? Have not I abused my Christian Liberty? Have I magnified God's Mercies, and dared to own God in the Blessings I have received? Have not I extenuated or denyed God's Mercies? Have not I neglected the Gifts of God that are in me? Have not I by my lukewarmness betrayed Christ's Cause? Have not I neglected my Duty of Prayer, upon the account of some Worldly Interest? Have not I begg'd of God things contrary to the Will of God?

As to the *Fourth Commandment*, which doth in a special manner respect the Lord's Day; Have I gone this Day with joy into the House of God? Have I heard the Word and treasured it up in my Heart? Have not I aimed more at the information of my Judgment, than at warming my Affections? Was it Curiosity or Piety that led me to the Temple? Have I gather'd my Thoughts together in the publick Prayers of the Church, and hath my Heart and Desires gone along with the Supplications the Minister of God

put

put up to Heaven? Have not I thought of my Trade, and Farms, and Oxen, while I have been repeating the Words after God's Minister? Have I meditated, and bid my Thoughts fly up to Heaven to take a view of my Eternal rest? Have I read in private? Have I call'd my Family together, read to them, instructed them, made them give me an account of what they remember? Have not I preferred my worldly Profit to day before my Duty? Have not I staid away from the publick Worship of God for worldly Gain? When I received the Holy Sacrament to day, was my Thoughts fixed on the Cross of Christ? Was my Soul affected with the Mystery of God's Love? Did my Sins grieve me when I beheld Christ crucified? Did the Sight of Christ's Crucifixion fill me with indignation against my Sins? Did it fill me with serious deliberate Resolutions to watch against them? Did it fill me with Praises and Adorations of the stupendious Humiliation of the Son of God? Did it make me resolve to imitate him in his Holiness? Have I according to the Apostle's Command, laid in store, as God hath prospered me the foregoing Week? Have I laid aside somewhat of my Gain for Pious Uses, to give them that need? Do I respect God's Ministers? Do I love them? Do I communicate to them that teach in all good things? Do I bear with their Infirmities? Do I obey

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them in things that tend to my Salvation
Do I give them that which is due to them
Am I kind, as well as just to them, especially to those, who faithfully labour in God's Vineyard ?

As to the *Fifth Commandment* ; Have I acted this Day as a Father, as a Mother, as a Master, as a Mistress, as a Magistrate, as a Tutor, as a Son, as a Daughter, as a Servant, as a Subject, as a Pupil, as an old Man, as a young Man, as a Husband, as a Wife, as a Minister, as a Hearer, as a Maid, as a Widow, as a rich Man, as a poor Man, ought to act, and as they are commanded by the Holy Ghost to act in their several Stations ? Have I been thankful for Kindnesses shew'd me ? Have I kept due distance to my Superiours ? Have I been officious to my Equals, kind to my Inferiours ? Have I studied gravity in Words, Actions, Gestures, and Postures, and Behaviour ? Have not I spoke Evil of Dignities ? Have not I been a Respector of Persons ? Have not I connived at Sins in my Children, or Friends, which I have reprov'd in a Servant, or one in a low Condition ? Have not I been negligent in providing for my Family ? Have not I spent the time in idleness which should have been spent in working in my Calling ?

As for the *Sixth Commandment* ; Have I been just in all my Dealings this day ? Have I

hurt Nobody in Word or Deed ? Have I moderated mine Anger ? Have I been easily reconciled to Persons, that did offend me ? Have not I studied Revenge ? Have I look'd up to Heaven when I have been reproach'd, and minded the Supreme Cause, that suffer'd this reproach to fall on me for my Sins, more than the Instrument or Person that abus'd me ? Have I been willing to recede from mine own right, for Peace and Quietness sake ? Have not I been cruel, harsh, morose, ill-natur'd to Men ? Have not I begun a Quarrel, or encourag'd it when it was begun ? Have I been sorry and troubled for any Injury that hath been offer'd to my Neighbour ? Have I been compassionate, tender-hearted ? Have I discharged the Duty of a Friend to those whom I have made believe that I was their Friend ? Have not I pretended Friendship, when I had no love for them ? Have not I dissembled with Men, flatter'd them, given them fair Words, when in my Heart I hated, despised, or undervalued them ?

As for the *Seventh Commandment* ; Have I maintained Chastity this day ? Have I watched over my Thoughts, Inclinations, and Desires ? Have I abhorr'd all obscene, filthy, and impure Communications and Actions ? Have I been very moderate in my Eating, Drinking, Recreation, Cloathing, and Desires after these outward Comforts ?
Have

The Best Exercise.

Have I dash'd all evil Concupiscence in my Soul in its Birth, and when first I felt it stirring? Have I been troubled when I have heard of the Adulteries, Fornications, and Lasciviousness of other Men? If I met with any immodest or undecent Sight, did I turn away mine Eyes, and impregnate my Mind with Arguments and Reasons against any sinful complacency?

As for the *Eighth Commandment*; Have I come justly by those things I have gain'd this day? Do I possess nothing that hath been got by Deceit or Oppression? Have I been faithful to my Trust? Have not I suffer'd my Neighbour to be wronged, when I might have prevented it? Have not I been guilty of Covetousness? Or have not I been guilty of another Extreme, which is Prodigality? Have not I thought much of giving something to the Poor, while I have spared no cost to adorn my Back and feed my Belly, considering the Plenty God hath given me? Have I been hospitable and glad to feed some Stranger or poor House-keeper at my Table? Have not I spent Money upon my Sin and Pride, or Wantonness? Have not I consented to another Man's Injustice? If I have wronged, or deceived my Neighbour, am I willing and ready to make Restitution?

As for the *Ninth Commandment*? Have I spoke nothing but Truth to day? Have I

kept

pt my Word to Day ? Have I perform'd
that I promised either to God or Man ?
Have not I by Equivocations, Palliations of
ms, and Mental Reservations sought to put
Cheat upon my Neighbour ? Have not I
been voluntarily ignorant of such Decepti-
ms ? Have not I reported things for certain,
which at the best have been but doubtfull ?
Have not I been peremptory in accusing my
Neighbour of an Error, when nothing but a
conjecture or surmise rais'd the Accusation ?
Have I been candid, and open-hearted in my
dealings ? Have not I betrayed the Secret
of my Friend ? Have not I been wavering in
asserting the Truth ? Have not I been very
forward to censure others ? Have I been si-
lent when I have had no certain Knowledge
of things, and have I been willing to be bet-
ter inform'd by others ? Have I patiently
heard what Men would say for themselves ?
And have not I given Judgment before I
have heard the Cause ?

As for the *Tenth Commandment* ? Have I
been contented this day with that condi-
tion God hath allotted me in this World ?
Have not I grumbled and repined that God
hath not provided so well for me, as he
hath done for others ? Have not I been
wishing that I were in such a Rich Man's
Case, or that I had such an Estate as my
Neighbour hath ? Or that I had such a
House, such Accomodations, as he is Master
of ?

of ? That I had as little to do, and had as plentiful a Table, and as prosperous a Life as he is blessed withal ? Have my Desires kept within their Bounds, and have not been ready to determine, what State and Condition is fittest for me ? And have not thought myself wiser than God in fancying I might have done better in another State of Life, than that he thought fit to place me in ?

3. In the same manner *Christ's* Sermon upon the Mount may be laid before us, and our Hearts called to an Account by such Queries as these : Have I this Day exercised any Poverty of Spirit ? Have I entertained low and humble Conceits of myself ? Hath my Heart been very indifferent as to these outward Conveniencies, and unconcerned whether I have much of this World's Goods or no ? Have my Sins been a grief or trouble to my Soul ? Have they made me take on and mourn because I have offended a tender Father, a Gracious God, a merciful Redeemer ? Have I studied Meekness and Gentleness in my Answers and Actions ? Have I felt a mighty hunger and thirst after Righteousness in my Soul ? Have I had an Opportunity to shew myself merciful ; and have I embraced the Opportunity ? Have I look'd to my inward Man, and endeavour'd to purify my Thoughts, Desires and Inclinations ? Hath my Heart gone as long

g with my Prayer? Have I studyed sincerity in my Dealings, and sincerity in all Speeches? Have I carryed myself peacefully? Have I given no just occasion to my Neighbour to quarrel with me? Have I, to the best of my Skill and Power, promoted Peace among dissenting Brethren, if I have met with any such? Have I exhorted them to love, to kindness, to mutual forbearing one another? If I have heard any Person speak evil of me, because of my Consciencefulness, have I rejoyced at it? Have I by my good Example endeavour'd to keep my Neighbours from sinning? Have I been ready to give good Counsel to People, if they have desired it, and God put an Opportunity into my Hand? Have I made the lesser Commandments my Rule, as well as the greater? Have I been afraid of calling my Neighbour Fool? Have I been cautious of giving Men any Nick-names? Have I been easily reconciled, if Men have been sorry for their Fault? Have not I cherish'd any unlawful Lust or Desire after Man or Woman? Have I shunn'd the occasions of such Sins as I am very prone to? Have I contented myself in myself in my common discourses with bare Assertions without vehement Asseverations? Have I crossed Flesh and Blood when I have found an unwillingness upon my Spirit to do a Duty, and done therefore more that I might overcome that backwardness?
And

And if any of my Neighbours hath desired me to do him a kindness, and I have been loath to do it, have I, to cross that unwillingness, done him a double kindness? How have I behaved my self to them whom I have looked upon as mine Enemies? Have I prayed for them? Have I forbore to speak ill of them? Have not I remembered the Injuries and withdrawn my self from doing that good to them which I might have done, and that which they desired me to do? Have I done more than others? God hath blessed me with greater Mercies than my Neighbours, have I endeavoured to go beyond them in Goodness as to do excel them in outward Advantages? Have I given some Alms to day? And have I not boasted of my Charity to others? Have I been contented with God's knowing of it? Have not I been desirous that others should know what I do as to that point? Have I prayed and when my Door was locked and any person knocked while I was at prayer have not I broke off my Prayers and opened the door, and been more concerned for men and the world than God's Glory? When I have fasted at any time, hath not my Fast been a Mockfast, and have not I upon the credit of such a Fast, allowed myself greater liberty in sinning and minding Vanity? Have I acted like a Person that believes I am of greater Worth than many Sparrows, and if God provide for them, that he will provide

provide much more for me ? Have I entirely
relyed upon God in the use of lawful
means ? Have not I tormented myself with
Cares and Carkings about a Livelihood ?
Have I taken notice how God takes Care
of Beasts, and Fowls of the Air ; and from
thence taken occasion to strengthen my
Faith ? Have I made it my first and chiefest
Business to secure God's Kingdom and its
Righteousness ? Have not I rashly judged
and condemned my Neighbour to day ? Have
not I spent my time in tittle tattle, and
of what this, and of what the other Man
or Woman doth ? Have I minded mine own
Errors more than my Neighbour's ? Have
I been more sollicitous to reform myself
than others ? Have I ask'd and begg'd of
God Spiritual Blessings with greater ear-
nestness and importunity, than Temporal ?
Have I done by my Neighbour as I would
be done by ? Have I walked upright, strict-
ly, and circumspectly ? Have I been very
Conscientious in my Ways, and been afraid
of the very Appearance of Evil ? Have I
given demonstration of the sincerity of my
Faith by my Works, and hath my outward
Conversation been suitable to my Profession ?
Have I been a practical Christian, and hath
the Will of God been the Rule of my Life
and Conversation ?

And these are the Methods I thought fit
to offer to your choice in this daily Self-
examina-

Psal. 119.
59.

examination, or communing with your own Hearts ; which Method soever you chuse I doubt not but by the Blessing of him, *who sees your Works*, it will have the same effect upon you it had upon *David*. whom it obliges to *turn his feet unto God's testimonies*. Methods are various, and differ according to our several apprehensions of things, and one may be easier and more agreeable to us than another ; but whatever Method we use it matters not much, so the chief things are but examined, which ought principally to be reflected on.

A mighty sense of the necessity of this Exercise will soon dictate Methods to a Soul that is solicitous about it : Where different ways lead to a Town, though one may be nearer, another more about, yet if the several Parties meet in the Town at last it's well enough ; so here, let this communing with our own Hearts be in what method it will if it do but produce the effects it should do it is commendable, and acceptable to Almighty God.

Nor is it necessary that this Exercise must necessarily be performed at night. He that finds himself fittest and freshest for it in the morning may call himself to an account for yesterday's actions at that time, and expect the same profit and advantage by it. Some Christians are so watchful and jealous over their Thoughts, and Words, and Actions, and

and Desires, that this Self-examination is their constant attendant where-ever they go, and they have got such a habit of it, that whenever they think, or speak, or act, they immediately bring all to this Touch-stone, and weigh it in this Ballance ; they have a Scheme of the Will and Precepts of God in their Minds ; and if any Action of theirs chance but in the least to clash with God's Will, their Hearts presently smite them ; they are presently aware of it, and they cry presently, Lord, be merciful unto me a Sinner ! And such persons need not tye themselves exactly to an hour either morning or evening, who do nothing else in a manner but examine themselves all day.

Persons who are arrived to a habit of Goodness may dispatch this task with greater ease than others, by putting only a few questions to their Souls, such as are,

1. *What Company have I been in to day, and what was my discourse and behaviour ?*

2. *What good have I done to day, either to mine own Soul, or to others ?*

3. *What good thoughts have I entertained ?*

4. *How have I managed my Devotions ?*

5. *Have I said or done any thing whereby either God or man might justly be offended ?*

And now what Arguments, what Motives, what Incentives, shall I give you to oblige you to venture on this Exercise ? God saw how necessary, how expedient it

The Best Exercise.

was for your Souls, and therefore commanded it. He that sees all things, saw how this would make you like Trees planted by the Rivers of Waters, which bring forth their fruit in due season, and therefore spoke the Word and ordered it; yet Good God! How loath are the generality of you to learn this Lesson! How like Brutes do many of you go to Bed without any consideration, without any reflection, without asking your Hearts whether you have done good or evil! You sin and are not concerned at it; you run on in your Errors, and feel no compunctions; you offend God and do not tremble at it; you wrong your Souls and are not troubled at it, and all because you will not come to this Self-examination at night. What makes you so backward to this Exercise? What makes you go to it as Malefactors do to the Place of Execution? What makes you shun this Watch-tower, as if it were as bad as the Valley of *Hinnom*? You are sick, desperately sick, why should you be loth to know it? God tells you, that you are sick, the Ministers of the Gospel tell you that you are sick, your own Consciences tell you that you are sick, the Word tells you that you are sick, and is it not worth enquiring whether you are so or no? What if it should be so? Do not you deserve to dye, that will not understand or be sensible, that a mighty Distemper is upon you,

a Distemper that will certainly kill you, if not prevented? Had not you better believe God who cannot fright you with Bugbears, and believe your Ministers, that seek your Welfare and your Consciences, that wish you may be happy, and the Word that would open your Eyes, than a few Lusts that care not what becomes of you, after a few Years Revelling here? The Exercise I exhort you to is so rational, that one would think Motives were altogether needless; yet to prevent that Plea that you know not, why should you discommode yourselves in this manner:

1. This is exceeding profitable Work; Profit is a mighty bait to you in other Concerns, and why can it not be so here? Yes, I know the reason, it would move and persuade you as much in the case before us, if you could grasp and feel the Profit; however you believe you have Souls as well as Bodies, and since you grant your Souls do not stand for Cyphers, surely you must allow, that the Profit your Souls receive is of moment, and deserves to be look'd after; and the Profit this Exercise yields is this, it makes you acquainted with yourselves. Alas! What doth it signify to be acquainted with your Estates, with the number of your Houses, with the number of your Sheep and Oxen, with your yearly Rent, and what is like to come in from such a Place,

and what is likely to come in from another, how many Trees are upon your Grounds, and what Portions you are able to give with your Children, while you are unacquainted with yourselves? This Self-examination will tell you what it is that aileth you, what you may trust to, what the bent and byass of your Heart is, what is in the most secret recesses of your Souls, whether God be in you, and whether you are guided by his Spirit, or whether Satan have taken possession of you, whether you are in a safe or dangerous State, where you are defective, where you fail, and where you do amiss, what hopes you have and whether those Hopes be well grounded, whether your Faith be Gold or Dross, whether you have a share in the Benefits of Christ's Death and Passion, what God hath done for you, whether he hath manifested himself to you, what Power he hath given you, what influences he hath imparted to you, what degrees of holiness, what joy, what comfort, what peace he hath communicated to you, what Corruptions you must chiefly pray against, what Temptations you must watch against, what Sins are most likely to eclipse your Glory, what are the fittest means to mortify your Lusts, where your weakness lies, where you lie most open to the Devil's assaults, in what you must fortify yourselves, &c. All this you may come to know by means of this Exercise;

Exercise ; and if a General think it profitable to know the number of his Souldiers, that he may sit down and consult whether he be able with Ten Thousand, to meet him that comes against him with Twenty Thousand ; if a Master of a Family think it profitable to know what Persons there are in his House, how many, and how qualify'd, that he may proportion his Expences to their number ; if a Tradesman think it profitable to know what Goods there are in his Shop, what Commodities in his Warehouse, that he may gratify his Customers ; if the Artificer think it profitable to know the motions of the Clock he hath made, that he may be able to mend it when out of order ; if a Farmer think it profitable to know what Corn there is upon his Ground, how his Barns are stored, and whether his Fruit will turn to account or no, that he may set such Prices on it as it deserves, certainly a Christian must needs think it profitable to be acquainted with himself, for hereby he may prevent the day of Clouds and thick Darknefs, and move God to repent himself of the evil which he hath said he will do unto him, and do it not.

To know the Motion of the Sun and Moon, and Stars, is not so profitable as to know my self ; and to be sensible of mine infirmities, gives me far greater light than if I were skilled in all the virtues of Plants

and Shrubs, and Minerals. If I know my self I take the readiest way to know God too; and we are assured, that to know him and Christ, whom he hath sent, is eternal life.

The Heathens had reason to cry up *Chilon*, for making this the principle of all Virtues, *Know thy self*; and indeed he that cares not for knowing the constitution and completion of his inward man is a Sot, and weaker in his Intellectuals than *Thales*, who while he was poring on the Stars above fell into a dangerous Pit below; had a man read all the Books in the World, and yet took no account of himself, in God's sight he would pass for a very ignorant man, and the day of Judgment would find him a Fool, tho' he had been Keeper of *Ptolemy's* Library. *St. Bernard* saith most truly, *Let thy Meditation and Contemplation begin at thy self. Be not searching in vain in things without thee, while thou neglectest thy self. If thou art Wise thou lovest thy Wisdom, if thou art a stranger to thy self, and tho' thou knowest all Mysteries, the secrets of the Earth, and the deep things of the Sea, while thou art unknown to thy self thou art like a man that builds a House without laying the Foundation, and instead of erecting a Fabrick prepares for Ruin and Destruction. Whatecer thou erectest without thy self will be but like a heap of Dust, which the Wind will soon scatter*

Bernard.
lib. 2. de
Confid. ad
Eugen.
Pap.

scatter and disperse abroad; but learning to know thy self thou drinkest of thine own Fountain; and this is to sit down in the lowest place, that thou mayest be exalted in due time.

2. Where men dare be so just, and kind to themselves as to commune with their own Hearts about the Words, Thoughts, and Actions of the day, there they discover, that the Word of God is fallen on good Ground, and that they do receive it in a good and honest Heart, and keep it and bring forth Fruit with Patience. Upon this qualification depend all the Blessings of the Bible. No Man must ever hope to be saved, that is not wrought upon by the Word of God; where this makes no impression, Men are given up to hard Hearts, and reprobate Minds.

Because thine Heart was tender, and thou didst humble thy self before God, and didst rend thy Cloaths, and weep before me, I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord, 2 Chron. 34. 27. Self-examination is a Testimony of a tender Heart, of a Heart that believes and trembles; of a Heart that takes notice of what God saith in his Word, and receives it with veneration; of a Heart that is sensible that God's Promises and Threatnings will certainly be fulfill'd, and accordingly fears, and hopes, and acts, and ventures,

and follows the Lamb whithersoever he goes.

3. That common Argument Men alledge as a discouragement from this Exercise, I must use here, as a powerful Motive to oblige them to this Self-examination; the Devil hinders them and dissuades them from it, they cry. But because he doth dissuade you, therefore you have reason more vigorously to apply yourselves to this Exercise; for he would fright you from it, because he sees it will certainly make you leave his Kingdom. As some in *Nero's* time who persecuted the Christians said, that the Christian Religion could not but be good and wholesome, and excellent, because so wicked a Man, and so a great a Monster fought against it; so this Self-examination must needs be an excellent thing, because the Devil uses so many Stratagems to oppose and crush it. His Business is to ruin Souls, as ours is to save them; and there must needs be something more than ordinary in this Duty, because he throws in so many Impediments and Remoras to put a stop to this advantageous Exercise.

4. Happy the Man, that is not afraid of judging himself, that can look into his Glass and is not ashamed to see his own Deformity, not ashamed to behold what manner of Man he is; this is the Man of whom the Son of Man will not be ashamed before God and his

his holy Angels: He that loves to look upon himself, shall see and taste how sweet and gracious the Lord is. O how much safer is it to let our Children, I mean our Thoughts and Words, and Actions, pass through this Fire now, than to leave ourselves altogether to the Judgment of God in the last day? By being our own Judges now, we may prevent the severity of the Judge of Quick and Dead in that day. By judging ourselves every day, the strength of our Souls is renew'd, our Minds get new light, our Affections new encouragements, our Hearts new motives, and our Inward man new arguments to shake off the clogs of Sin, and of a deceitful World.

God who cannot Err, and can sooner cease to be, than do any thing that is amiss, yet had no sooner finished his Works in the first Creation, but examined and considered them immediately, which makes *Moses* take notice, that *God saw that it was Good*, no doubt to shew us an Example; when the Lord *Jesus* shall one day appear in Robes of Celestial Light, and sit on the Throne of his Glory, and summon the careless World to come to Judgment, O how chearfully will the Man, that now sits Judge upon his own Actions, be able to present himself before that Dread Tribunal! His Heart will not suggest to him such Fears, and Terrors, as the Man will find, who hath not thought this

Gen. i. 10

this Exercise worth his care: He will be able to look upon Christ as his Father, as his Friend, as his Advocate, as his Intercessor, as his Mediator, that will stand betwixt him and God's Anger: His Conscience will bid him take courage, and lift up his Eyes with Joy, because his Redemption draws nigh. This must needs be so, for we are told by the Apostles, *If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord*, 1 Cor. 11. 31. To judge ourselves is to walk after the Spirit, and to mind the things of the Spirit, and we know there is no condemnation to them in *Christ Jesus*, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, *Rom. 8. 1*. when thus we call ourselves to an account, we act like the Children of God, like Children that are afraid of offending their Heavenly Father, and if Children then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joynt-Heirs with Christ, *Rom. 8. 7*.

And these are the constant, daily, and standing Exercises which a Man or Woman that names the Name of Christ, must necessarily apply themselves to, if they will not rest in a form of Godliness, and delude their own Souls; Christianity is no idle Calling, and they that stroak themselves for being Christians, and sit with folded Arms, and yawn, and stretch themselves upon their Couches, have learn'd their Divinity of the Devil.

Work

Work hard, is the Christian's Motto, and there is nothing implies a greater contradiction than Idleness and Christianity. Shall any Man talk of Ease and Softness, that in his Baptism hath vow'd himself to a continual Warfare, engaged himself to fight under the Banner of *Jesus*? The time of rest is to come, the present time is designed for Labour and Trouble. A Christian must not look for rest here; God hath promised him no such thing, till he comes to Heaven. Nothing in Nature is idle, and shall a Christian be the only idle Thing in the World?

*Vid. Chrys.
in 2 Epist.
ad Timoth.
Hom. 8.*

I know there is no Man but finds some Business or other to divert his Thoughts; but in vain, Sirs, do you talk of Business, while the Business of your Souls lies at six and sevens. No worldly Employment deserves the Name of Business in comparison of this we speak of. These Exercises are the Business we come into the World for, and he is idle that doth not work the work of God. Did ever any Man hire a Day-labourer to see him only eat lustily, or walk up and down in the House with his Hands in his Pocket? And can we be so unreasonable as to think Christ hires us to take our Pleasure here, when he hath so much work for us to do? Day-labourers spend the greatest part of the day about their Master's Work,
and

and employ but an Hour or so in eating, must the greatest Part of our time be spent in our great Master's Work, and the least in our Worldly Business. Not that a Man is obliged, of the Twelve Hours of the day to spend Nine or Ten in Praying and Reading, and but Two or Three in his Business. But as our worldly Business must be followed with Industry and Care for the Support of our Selves and Families, so in the midst of that, our Great Master's Work may be carried on, and in the very works of our Calling his Will, which forbids us to act against his Law, must be so eyed and minded, that when that and our Business come to clash, our Business must give way to the other, and this is to spend the greatest Part of our time in his Service, when not only in our set Devotions, but in the very works of our Calling, we make his Will a Lanthorn to our Feet. The Work our Master hath to do for us, are these Exercises, and he that said

Prov. 6. 6 *Go to the Ant thou Sluggard, and consider her ways, and be wise,* certainly never intended we should sail on a gentle stream to the Port of Glory.

Which of the two do we count most useful, a Ship that lies still in the Harbour, or that which encounters with the Waves and Billows of the Sea? The standing Water, or the flowing Stream? The Iron that lies by, or that which we do daily take Pains about.

And

ng, and which of the two do you think can God
favourably look upon, the Soul that's busy
and bestirs herself, is industrious and labori-
ous to make sure of Heaven, or the Soul,
that lies dissolv'd in Ease and Idleness?
While *David* was engaged in a War, he
had no leisure to defile himself with *Bath-*
sheba; while *Solomon* was busy in building
the Temple, his Women could not seduce
his Heart; while *Sampson* was fighting with
the *Philistines*, *Delilah* could not entice
him; so here, while you are busy in these
Exercises, you cannot be taken Captive by
the Devil. There are indeed Men that are
worthy of their Hire, but then they are La-
bourers, not Loiterers; and though Christ
promised Refreshment, yet it is to those a-
lone, who are pleased with Working, and
take their Master's Yoak upon them, and
learn to exercise themselves as he did, *Mat.*
i. 28.

These Exercises will make you capable of
being admitted to a very great intimacy and
friendship with the infinite Majesty of Hea-
ven. The *secret of the Lord is with them*
that fear him, saith the Man that had found
it by Experience, *Psal.* 25. 14. Through
these Exercises the Soul comes to be defeca-
ted from her dross, from carnal Lusts and
Affections, and is made fit company for the
Deity, for so delighted is God with these
Exercises, that the Soul that runs this Race,
is

is in a capacity of drinking of the Rivers
God's Pleasures; *O how great is thy goodnes*
which thou hast laid up for them that see
thee? Psal. 31. 19.

God's Goodness is a Treasure inexhaustible, so full of Charms, that the more a Man thinks of it, the more he may; the thought of it put the Soul into a kind of Fever, for the more she drinks of this living Water, the more she may; other Arts and Sciences Man may bring to perfection, and see the utmost of them: But God's Goodness, there is no coming to the Top of it; the Soul that contemplates it this Hour sees in it new Mysteries the next; and he that is ravished with the contemplation of it to day, is ready to lose his reason in the admiration of it to morrow. It is a Fountain of Life, which sends forth a Thousand Streams, and yet is as full as ever. It is the hiding Place of a holy Soul, and the Scripture means nothing else by God's Banqueting-House, but his Goodness. This enriches the Soul beyond all the Wealth the World boasts of; and I know not what Name to give to its influences; for like the heat of Fire, they can only be felt, but cannot be painted.

It is the sweetest Labyrinth for a Man of Thoughts to lose himself in, and the more a Man is lost in it, the greater Pleasure he feels, and lies softer than the *Sybarite* upon his Bed of Roses; humane Tongue is not able

vers e to describe it, and the safest way is to
odne and amaz'd at it, is to say nothing, silence
at fe eing the truest sign of admiration. Not one
hauf a hundred knows what it means, and no-
a Ma ing but a Beam of Heaven let into the Mind,
ough an give the Soul any lively apprehensions of
r, fe It is a thing that affects the whole Bo-
r, th y as well as the Soul, and if the Soul feels
ces hat it is, it is ready to wish for more Souls
e th and Bodies to participate of the Satisfaction.
then Thousands feed upon this Goodness, yet have
tha o sense of it, and were all Men sensible of
ne t, there is not one would go to Hell, or turn
she roctor for the Devil. If it be seen clearly,
rea charms, and the Understanding that be-
of holds it without a Glass and with open face,
hic must protest it is the sweetest and most reviv-
et ing Cordial imaginable.

This lively sense of his Goodness, the Al-
of mighty vouchsafes to those that thus exer-
ing cise themselves unto Godliness, for these are
his the Men that fear him; the Lord is their Psalm. 23. 1
one Shepherd, and they shall not want, they
d shall not want a Friend in adversity, when
es Lovers and Friends are put far from them,
be and their Acquaintance into darkness, God
on will be their Friend, when they have no Per-
re son to advise or consult with, or to make
he their Complaints to, he will guide them by
on his Counsel, when their Flesh and their
a- Heart faileth, and all Creatures fail them,
le God will be their Strength and their Porti-
on

Pfal. 56.8

on for ever; He'll hear their cry, they shall unbosom themselves unto him, and he shall bow down his Ears to them, tell their wanderings, put their Tears in his Bottle, and write all their Sighs and Groans in his Book. What a Comfort is it to have a Bosom friend here on Earth, to whom we can speak our Minds, who will bear the Burthen with us, and compassionate and pity us, and to whom we can unlock and open the very inside of our Hearts: But then what a Comfort must it be to have God for my Friend, to whom I can have recourse to in all my Necessities, make my moan to, and tell him how my Heart is griev'd, who will not laugh at my Calamity, nor mock when my Fear comes, whose Bowels yearn over me, who will advise me for the best, bid me lay my wearied Head in his Bosom, direct me to the Breasts of Consolation, from which I may suck Life and Vigour, deal sincerely with me, act for me, speak for me, and contrive my good, and be concerned for me as if my Necessities were his own.

Such honour have all his Saints; so kind so good; so wonderfully kind is God to all such as exercise themselves unto Godliness, they shall want nothing that is necessary either for Soul or Body. Their Souls shall be fed with the Promises of the Gospel, guided by the Eternal Spirit, provided for from the Store-house of Grace and Mercy

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may their Bodies shall never want, and God will either bless their Industry and Labours of their Callings, as he did *St. Paul's* diligence, *2 Thess.* 3. 8. or turn the Hearts of other men towards them, who shall relieve them, assist them, receive them, and redress their Grievances, as he did in the Case of *Onesimus*, *Philem.* v. 12. or send an Angel from Heaven to feed them, as he did *Elijah*, *Reg.* 19. 5. Nay, suppose that it should be expedient for God's Glory, that they suffer want of Necessaries, yet even they shall not want Grace to support them, Courage to bear up under it, Joy to keep their Heads above Water, and Resolution to trust in him, though the Lord should kill them, as we see, *2 Cor* 12. 9.

Alas! What can they want, while God supports them? God! that Horn of Plenty that Ocean of Goodness, that Sea of Kindness, that Perfection of Beauty, that comprehensive Light, that inexhaustible Fountain of Bliss, that Centre of Happiness, that Rock of Ages, that Spring of Comfort, that Treasure of Beatitude, that Store-house of Provision, whose Years do not fail, whose Munificence never decays, who can never be poor, whose Liberality is infinite, who gives before Men ask, who is Present when he seems to be Absent, whose Love no Rhetorick can explain, whose Riches the Tongues of Angels cannot express, and you may as well say,

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that

that *Solomon* in all his Glory was in Want as think, that they whose Shepherd God is can be in Want. They want no other Shepherd but him, no other Comforter but him, no other Riches but him, no other Pleasure but him, no other Friend but him, no other King, no other Master, no other Father but him; if they want a Father, he'll be more to them than a Father; if they want a Mother, a Sister, or a Brother, he will be more to them than all these can be, as they that have the Light of the Sun, have more than if they had an hundred Candles in the Room. For they have him who is All-in-all; so that in their very Wants they can rejoyce in him, in their very Misery they can boast of him, in their Danger confide in him, in their Necessities roll all their Cares upon him, and when Heaven and Earth are like to be confounded and mingled together, look up and cry, God is our Refuge, a present Help in the time of Trouble, therefore will we not fear though the Earth be moved, and though the Hills be carried into the midst of the Sea. *Psal, 46. 1.*

What if they have not the outward Comforts of this present World, the Reward God intends them lies beyond this Globe. These outward Conveniencies are Rewards too low and mean for God to bestow, and there would be no difference between such Men, and those that have their Portion in this

this Life, should God heap upon them such Blessings of his left-hand; God lets them want these outward Ornaments on purpose to let the World know, that he hath nobler Things in store for them, not but that sometimes even those that are diligent in these Exercises, have much of this World's Good; but that doth not make them a whit the happier, but only encreases their Account, and obliges them to greater Liberality, and greater circumspection in their Stewardship.

Behold, Christians! To what still Streams, to what pleasant Pastures these Exercises lead you! What a rich Table they prepare for you in the presence of your Enemies, how they anoint your Heads, and make your Cups run over! These Exercises attract the noblest Spectators imaginable. Have not you read, have not you heard, what the presence of a Monarch can do with Wrestlers and Men of Activity? What valiant Acts have some Men perform'd in the *Olympick Games*, (whence the Word *Exercising unto Godliness* borrows its name) when some great Princes have look'd on? Men have attempted to do more than Men, when the presence of a King hath enliven'd their Endeavours; and as tedious as these Exercises may seem to some of you, yet is not the company that beholds your Fight and Labours, motive enough to descend into the Field?

The Best Exercise:

Behold the Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity becomes a Spectator ; the Father is present to applaud the Attempt ; the Son present to encourage it ; the Holy Ghost present to crown it, and round about the Throne of this bright Majesty stand Myriads of Angels, and they all look on.

Christian, fancy thou seest *David* fighting with *Goliath* in a Valley between two vast Mountains, while on the one there lies encamped the Army of the *Philistines*, on the other the Host of *Israel* ; think what Courage and Resolution it must infuse into the young Soldier's Heart, to see himself gazed and stared on by two Armies of Friends and Enemies ! Why ? Thy Condition, while thou exercisest thyself unto Godliness is the same, thou standest in this Valley of Tears ; on one Hill stands the Great God of Heaven and Earth, with all the Host of Heaven, and beholds what thou art doing ; on the other are spread all the Legions of Hellish Furies, ready to triumph in thy Fall : Can there be a greater encouragement than to see a glorious God before thee ready to set the Lawrel on thy Temples, if thou darest follow after, that thou may'st apprehend that for which thou art also apprehended of *Christ Jesus* : Nay, he calls to thee from the Hills of Heaven, *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy Name, thou art mine when thou passest through the Waters I will*

*be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the Fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee; and I shall not tempt thee to do more than thy careless Neighbours, more than thy Nature will agree to, more than thy sensual Appetite will like of, more than the sober Heathens do, and shall not this make thy Righteousness surmount that of Hypocrites, and painted Sepulchres? Arise, and depart, for there is not thy rest? Rest! Ay, that's the glorious Fruit of this Tree of Life, that's the comfort which these Exercises end in. The weary Day-labourer after his toilsome Work in the Field, the Seaman after his hard tugging at the Oar, and labouring in Storms and Tempests, does not rest himself so sweetly as he that exercises himself Day and Night unto Godliness; for he rests on the down of Angels, on the Wings of *Cherubims*, on the Breast of *Jesus*, and shall rest e're long in *Abraham's Bosom*, in the Bosom of Glory, in the Bosom of everlasting Mercy, where life is to be found in its perfection, life without sorrow, life without fear, life without corruption, life without disturbance, life without change, life without deformity, life without discontent, life without dishonour, life without envy, life without decays, where no adversary comes to molest it, no Sin to spoil its Beauty, no Temptation to break its*

The Best Exercise.

Order, no Devil to discompose its Harmony, where the Day is everlasting, the Hours measured by Eternity, and Months and Years by infinity of Bliss and Glory.

Go to now, ye careless Men that are more frightened by these Exercises, than by all the terrors of the burning Lake : As laborious as these Exercises seem to be, without them
 Esai. 57. expect no Rest, no Peace, no Tranquility ;
 21. for there is no Peace, saith my God, unto the Wicked. Expect Grief, Trouble, Anguish, despairing Thoughts, a turbulent Soul, an affrighted Conscience, for these must certainly be the Portion of your Cup one day. How should your Life end in rest, who never tried your strength in these Exercises ? Lift up your Eyes and behold the Man that exercises himself unto Godliness : Hear what becomes of him at his death ; *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them, Rev. 14. 13.*

There remains therefore a Rest for the People of God, a Rest, which Tempests cannot shake, Storms cannot annoy, Frosts cannot chill, and Heats cannot consume ; a Rest where there is Joy without Mourning, Tranquility without Labour, Honour without a Period, Wealth without danger of losing it, Beatitude without the least shadow of Calamity, What Songs ! What Hymns ! What
 Musick !

Musick ! What Praises ! What Hallelujahs !
What Melody ! What Harmony is to be met
with there ! Where the Citizens of Heaven
are all Organists, and the Spirits of Men
made perfect joyn in perpetual Concert, to
sing Salvation to our Lord and to the Lamb
for ever and ever ; where Bitterness and Gall
have no place, where Wickedness and Ma-
lice must never look in, where Want and
Poverty must for ever cease, where Quarrel-
ling and Accusing, and Impleading one ano-
ther will all have done ; where all Violence
and Discord dies, and all Grief, and Pain, and
Anguish, is swallow'd up in an Eternal
Jubilee.

We read of Men, as of *Dioctlesian*, of
Partacus, of *Aeneas*, of *Rustan*, of *Mab-*
er, that from Shepherds and mean Men,
have come to be great Lords and Emperors ;
but this is nothing to the Happiness he
can be confident of, that seriously exercises
himself in the Task I have laid down ;
the time will come, I see the joyful day ap-
proaching, I see it by the Eyes of Faith,
when this humble Soul, this laborious Saint,
this Self denying Christian, this contemptible
Man shall change his Rags into purple Robes,
and be translated from a momentary Sorrow
to an Eternity of Rest and Satisfaction,
where the Lamb that is in the midst of the
Throne shall feed him and shall lead him
unto living Fountains of Waters, and God
shall

Psal. 126.

5. 6.

shall wipe all tears from his Eyes; then shall be fulfilled the saying that is written They that sow in Tears shall Reap in Joy he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious Seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoycing bringing his Sheaves with him.

Vid. Basil

Tom. 1.

Hom.

24 ad Ado-

lescentes.

While young *Hercules*, saith the *Apolo-*
logue, was doubting with himself, which
 way he should take, whether that of Vice
 or the other of Vertue, behold there appeared
 to him two Women, one gloriously Appa-
 rell'd with tempting Looks and gay Attire
 and a flowing Mantle, that wanton'd in the
 Air, promising him present satisfaction, and
 whatever his sensual Appetite could desire
 but saying nothing of what would be the
 exit or consequence of all this: The other
 stood aloof, with a meager Face, in a ragged
 Garb and torn Cloaths, promising nothing
 but Sweat and Labour, and danger at first
 but behind her was a Scene of Triumph, and
 at the end of the Swords and Daggers that
 encompassed her, hung Pearls and Rubies
 and the richest Stones. The valiant Ma-
 soon found out the Cheat of the former
 and resolutely chose to become a Disciple
 of the other.

Thus acts the Man, that exercises him-
 self unto Godliness, he flights Pleasure, and
 embraces Labour, for he knows that bitter
 beginnings will have a glorious end; and

as *Jason* fought his way through Serpents, and wild Bulls to get the Golden Fleece, and became Master of it, so he swims contentedly through a Sea of Wormwood to find a new World of sweetness and satisfaction; and the Years during which he serves for this *Rachel*, seem to him but as so many days, for he loves what he sees not, and believes what he cannot grasp as yet, yet believing he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of Glory.

The Prayer.

O God, who searchest the Heart and the Reins! How deceitful is my Heart! How many are the ways that lead to destruction! How innumerable are the Wiles of the Devil! yet by thy light they may all be discovered, and their danger perceived, and their ill intent laid open. How small an Atome doth the bright light of the Sun make visible! Therefore that light which thou vouchsafest to an humble Mind must be supposed far more effectual to manifest all the Stratagems of the powers of darkness. O my God, make me willing to see the designs of my spiritual Enemies against me, that I may resist them, oppose and overcome them. My Heart is a Field where many Tares are mix'd with the wholesome Wheat. If I search not, how shall those
Tares

Tares be rooted up? If I examine not, what can I expect, but that like the Field of the slothful, and like the Vineyard of the man void of Understanding, it will be all grown over with Thorns, and Nettles will cover the Face thereof? Shall I say a little more Sleep, a little more slumber, till my Poverty come on like an armed Man? O my God, let my greatest care be, that thou and my Soul be Friends. But how shall I know thou art my Friend, except I examine my Soul, and see what tokens of thy love I find there. O let me not be afraid to know my Thoughts, my Words, my Actions, my Inclinations. If I know they are evil, that I may reform them: If I find they are good, that I may rejoyce in them. O teach me the art of searching my heart. Let me not continue a stranger to myself. Let it be a pleasure to me to take notice how I thrive in Grace. Let me know my danger. O keep me from wandering in the dark. Let me see how I go astray, that I may get into the right way again. Convince me of the easiness and pleasantness of this task. O let me not think it a burthen to my Soul. I have dwelt too long in the Suburbs of Religion. O perswade me to enter into the City which hath foundations. Let the reward that is before me be a strong motive to me, to put on the whole Armour of God. O how sweet will it be to me to see thy assistance,

not, Field of thy Spirit, my progress in goodness, the advancement of my Sins, the decay of my Corruptions, and my nearer approach to Heaven. If I examine my heart, all this will be made manifest to me; for thou wilt teach me the way of life, and in thy light I shall see light through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hitherto I have discoursed of the ordinary, constant, and daily Exercises of a Christian. The extraordinary follow in order, and they are.

1. V O W I N G,
2. F A S T I N G,
3. W A T C H I N G, *and*
4. S E L F - R E V E N G E.

I call them extraordinary, because they are to be used but now and then, when either some great corruption is to be subdued, or our Devotion wants quickning, or when God's Glory requires it, or when our Neighbour's welfare and edification is to be signal-ly promoted; To make these Exercises daily and constant, were the way to ruin the Body, and to obstruct the Soul in her flights to Heaven, and instead of honouring God, to render ourselves incapable of his Service. They are in the nature of Salt and Vinegar, to give a relish to our Spiritual Food, but they would be but ill Meat, were they made
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our Dyet: Some that have attempted to make them their daily Employment, have exposed themselves to the Devil's Tyranny and by going farther than God design'd, or requir'd, have been suffer'd to fall into unspeakable inconveniences.

That using severities upon our selves is sometimes necessary, is evident from hence, because our Bodies naturally are Enemies to our Souls, and nothing is so great a clog to our Spirits, as our sensual Appetite. The more the Body is denied, the freer is the Soul in her Motions; and the less the Flesh is regarded, the more the Spirit soars and mounts up to its Center. It is certainly our indulging our carnal ease so much that makes us dull and lazy in God's Service, and had we the art of crossing Flesh and Blood, our Duties would be perform'd with greater life and fervency. But here the golden mean must be used, and to avoid extremes, is without doubt the safest way we can walk in. As a Man by a total neglect of these Exercises, will make but a very slow Progress in Religion, so he that uses them too much, may fall into divers Snares and Temptations. Discretion must be the Rule, and Prudence the Guide in things of this nature. Those that want this Compass, must suffer themselves to be entirely guided by wiser Men; and Laymen, whose occasion will not permit them to consider every step of the

the way, must here resign themselves to the Guidance and Conduct of serious and able Ministers, who, if they have any sense of the Power of Godliness, will be ready to assist them in this work, and readily direct them, that they may get safe to Heaven.

I do not deny but that these Exercises have been and are abused in the Church of Rome, but shall their perverting the Primitive Institution, make us regardless of the Duty? and because they go beyond the just bounds of these Severities, must they therefore be quite laid aside, and despised as useless? Who ever rejected Wine, because Men made themselves drunk with it? Or did ever any Man forswear eating Meat, because the Glutton eats till he makes himself sick with it? I shall speak distinctly of these extraordinary Exercises, and in each of them lay down certain Rules, that must be observed in the practice to free them from the brand of Will-worship, Superstition, or sinful voluntary Humility.

I. Extraordinary Exercise.

And this is *Making Vows*; An Exercise used and practised by the Saints before the Law, *Gen.* 28. 20. under the Law, *Psal.* 116 14. 18. and under the Gospel, *Act.* 18. 18. *Act.* 21. 23. 24. and commanded, *Psal.* 76. 11. That a Vow, is a deliberate, voluntary, solemn

solemn Promise made to Almighty God of things lawful and possible, is so known thing, that I need not insist much upon the definition. Every purpose is no Vow, nor is a bare intention to do such a thing, to be reckoned among these greater obligations of the Soul. A Vow made in drink is a Sin but no Vow, because a Vow requires the presence of Reason and Deliberation; and the same may be said of a Vow made in the height of Anger and Passion. To oblig myself by a Vow to do a thing that is forbidden by the Law of God is Impiety, or to vow a thing which lies not in my power to perform, is Folly and Distraction. Not to repent of such Vows, is to continue in Sin, and the longer the Repentance is deferred, the more we aggravate our Condemnation. Of this Nature were those Vows the *Jews* made to the prejudice of their Parents, whereof Christ speaks, *Mat. 15. 4. 5. It is a Gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me*, i. e. a Vow whereby Children that had any ill-will to their Parents, vow'd their Goods and Monies to the use of the Church, and by that means pretended, they could not break their Vow, and relieve their Parents.

To make Vows, is as lawful now, as it was in the days of *Moses*; nor doth any command of the Gospel forbid us to enter into such Engagements. Vowing is not an Appendix

pendix of the Ceremonial Worship, but a dictate of the Law of Nature, and who knows not how that the *Gentiles* by the instinct of this have made such Vows in time of Danger and Necessity? As we are Christians, we are to give all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure, and to make Phil. 4. 8. use of all wholsome things that may promote Salvation; and since these Vows do as much promote Religion as any other means, it is but reason we should think of them, and not neglect such useful Obligations. And to direct my Reader in this Exercise, I shall shew him, 1. when and upon what occasions such Vows may and must be made; and 2. what Rules must be observ'd in the making, 3. Encourage him to the making of them, and 4. Enforce the Obligation to keep them after they are made.

I. When and upon what occasion such Vows may and must be made. And to this I answer.

I. *In time of great Trouble and Necessity. I will go into thy House with Burnt-Offerings, I will pay thee my Vows which my Lips have utter'd, and my Mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble,* saith the Royal Psalmist, *Psal. 66. 13, 14.* It was a time of fear and danger, when *Jacob* enter'd into a Vow to consecrate the Tenth part of his Income unto God and Pious uses, *Gen. 28. 20.* And it is like, it was in Imitation of

The Best Exercise.

of him, that *Alban* the *British* King vowed the Tenth part of all his Goods to God, when he was assaulted by the *Normans*; and such Vows are ordinarily made upon condition that God do actually grant the Blessing we expect. So the Children of *Israel*, *Numb.* 21. 2. If thou wilt indeed deliver this People into my Hands, then I will utterly destroy their Cities; and so *Clodoveus* the *French* King justly vowed, when oppressed by the *Almains*, that if God would give him the Victory, he would certainly become Christian. And in the same manner a Christian may lawfully vow in Sicknefs, that if God will restore him, he will keep the day of his deliverance holy unto the Lord; or if in a Storm at Sea, that if God shall be pleased to bring him safe to shoar, he will give an hundred or two hundred Pounds or more to some Hospital. And though God is no Merchant that sells his Gifts or Blessings, yet in these Cases like an indulgent Master, he is willing to encourage us to our Duty, and to bring us to a sense of his Mercy, and he is so far from taking these conditions in our Vows ill, that very often he grants the Blessing for which we bound our Souls, on purpose to make us in love with his Service; and though the Names of those that have vowed, and yet after their Vows have perished, are not written down upon

upon Tables, as the Atheist *Diogoras* scoffingly said, yet where God doth not grant the Mercy that is desir'd in the Vow, it is either because he sees that the Person vowing is not in good earnest resolv'd to perform his promise, or because the grant of the Blessing desired would prove an occasion of his greater dissoluteness, or because he intends better things to the man that vows, than the thing he begs or hopes upon his Vow to enjoy.

II. *After some signal deliverance from Danger and Calamity.* To vow after some such Mercy, is a thing so natural with ingenuous Spirits, that even the good-natur'd Seamen in *Jonas*, c. i. 16. though they were Heathens, when the Sea ceased from raging, *feared the Lord exceedingly, and offer'd a Sacrifice unto the Lord, and made Vows.* Prodigious deliverances strike the Soul into amazement, and a Man that hath any sence of the unexpected favour, can do no less than Vow unto God some signal Devotion by way of Gratitude for the Mercy. The Deliverance is great and signal, and the Devotion ought to be so too. The Vow shews that the Gratitude is hearty, and nothing is so great an Argument that the sence of the Mercy is vigorous and lively, as when we bind ourselves to make returns some way suitable to God's Benignity. It cannot but be pleasing to God upon such occasions to

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vow

vow that either we will pray seven times a day with *David*, or that we will allow something more than ordinary for charitable Uses, or that we will be more diligent in visiting the Sick, the Widow, and the Fatherless, or that we will go into such ill Company no more, or that we will shun such occasions of evil, or that we will take care of some poor Children, and either breed them up, or keep them at School, or get them to be instructed in the Principles of Religion, or that we will employ so much time every day in working for indigent and distressed Persons, &c. Such things as these are or may be all within our Power, and consequently may lawfully be vow'd, and we have reason to believe that for Christ's sake God will behold these Free-will Offerings with a Gracious Eye, because they proceed from Love; and he that dwells in Love, dwells in God, and God in him, saith the Apostle 1 *Joh.* 4. 16.

III. *When some strong Corruption is to be subdu'd, and an easy matter will not make it yield.* When after many weak purposes we relapse into the Sin, and notwithstanding our Resolutions against it now and then suffer ourselves to be misled into it. In such Cases where gentler Remedies will do no good, it's fit, yea necessary, to use stronger Medicines; and where our Flesh doth baffle our good purposes, to cross it with stronger Vows

Vows. He that finds himself inclined to drink immoderately when he comes into Company, hath no better way to overcome the Sin, than by Vowing, either not to drink at all in such Societies, or to drink but one Glass and no more, or to abstain from such a Liquor, which is apt to intoxicate him, or not to come into Company which he knows will tempt him to Intemperance. The man that finds himself subject to carnal self-pollutions, may certainly forbear them, if he will enter into solemn Vows, never to be guilty of such Sins again. If the Swearer would make a Vow to God to give a Crown to the Poor if ever he swear again, without all peradventure the Sin in a short time would dye, provided he hath Conscience enough to keep his Vow: And all grosser Sins as gaming, obscene Discourses, and Atheistical talk, &c. may be vanquished thus. If the Adulterer would solemnly vow, and add imprecations to his Vow, not to come to his Harlot again, and the Fornicator not to embrace the strange Woman again, they might break the Neck of these dreadful Sins, and indeed one such Vow shall do more than twenty fainter Purposes or Prayers.

In lesser Sins and Sins of Infirmity, it is not so safe to vow as in the other, because we are too apt to be surprized into such Errors, and do commit them before we are

aware, yet he that vows to do something that's irksome to Flesh and Blood, in case he yields to any lesser Sin; by Example, in case he lies in Jest, or in case he breaks out into a Passion, &c. takes the readiest way to subdue the corruption, and to be Master of his Spirit; as to vow not to sin at all would be rash and foolish, and promising thing ordinarily impossible; so to vow to mulct ourselves if we commit a Trespass of Infirmary, is to act like wise Men, and such are in good earnest resolved to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the fear of God.

IV. *When we find a backwardness or unwillingness upon our Spirits to do a Duty we find commanded, or are put upon by the secret instigation of our Consciences.* He that finds himself loth to pray three times a day, must vow that he will do so, and then he must do it, and whatever unwillingness may remain after the Vow is past, time and use will make it easy. He that is loth to do good to the Man that has formerly wronged him, must vow to God that he will do it, and force himself to it. Nature, when it will not be led, must be drawn by violence, and though unwillingness in the performance of a Duty, makes no very sweet perfume to Heaven, yet that offering violence to our Natures is a kind of conquering ourselves

and consequently is an acceptable Present to the great Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. This way he that was loth to visit a Neighbour against whom he had some prejudice, may be brought to a Christian Temper again; and he that would not sing Psalms but at Church, may be reformed. This way the Man that before cared not for good discourses, may come to speak of spiritual things with delight and satisfaction, and he that was a Stranger to Hospitality may come to open his House and Heart to the Stranger and Traveller. In all these Cases Vows are seasonable, and what Rules are to be observed in vowing, is the second particular I am to treat of.

2. The Rules that are fit to be taken notice of in this Exercise, are these following.

I. *The Vows must not be made to Saints;*

For a Vow is a Religious Worship, and therefore to be given to none but God. Among the Papists it is true, such Vows are common, but we have not so learn'd Christ, nor did Antiquity allow this Profanation; and though *Marcellina*, St. *Ambrose's* Sister, seems to have made a Vow to St. *Laurence* for her Brother *Satyrus's* good Vayage; yet the Words used by St. *Ambrose*, who relates the Story, import no such thing, for

Vid Baron. Annal.

Tom. 4 ad an. 383.

sect. 15 qui citat Ant-

brof. orat.
in Fun.
fratr.

Tuis enim
votis apud
sanctum
Martyrem
Laurenti-
um impe-
tratum
nunc cog-
nosimus
commoa-
tum

he tells his Sister, that by her Vows at St. *Laurence* the Martyr's, her Brother's safety was procured, and those Vows might be Vows to God made in St. *Laurence's* Church or Oratory, where the Bones of St. *Laurence* were buried. It is not necessary to conclude that the Vow was made to the Saint. However the Practice of a Woman is no Law, and had she made a Vow to the Saint by her Brother's approbation, we know who it was that said, *Vow and pay unto the Lord your God*, Psal. 76. 11. nor do we read in all the Word of God's that any Vow were ever made, but unto him that understands our Thoughts afar off, and to whom it was said, *Praise waiteth for thee, O God in Zion, and unto thee shall the Vow be performed*, Psal. 65. 1. Nor do the later examples of *Chosroes*, King of *Persia*, making Vow to St. *Sergius*, of King *Pepin* vowing to St. *Suibert*, or of *Otho the Great* vowing to St. *Laurence*, make the thing more lawful; for an ill Custom being once broach'd, shall not want Followers, if the subtle Prince of the Air can any way contribute to the itch of imitation,

Si quis vo-
verit se ab-
sistentium
a lacte,

II. *These Vows must be serious*, not only in respect of the matter, but in respect of the manner too. As to the matter they must not be slight and trivial things that are vow'd to God; He that should vow

that he will ride abroad such a day to take
 the Air, or go into his Garden such an Hour,
 or go and buy such a thing he stands in need
 of, or have such a dish of Meat for his din-
 ner, &c. would make a Jest of this Sacred
 Vow, and prophane an Ordinance which God
 looks upon to be of the greatest weight and
 moment. And as to the manner of the
 performance, it is fit that the Vow should
 be accompanied with Prayer and Supplica-
 tions for God's Assistance in the due perfor-
 mance, and therefore the Greeks by one
 Word expresses both Vow and Prayer. Pray-
 er sanctifies the Vow, and fastens the Soul in
 her resolution to keep it. Hence it was
 that the Saints of old made their Vows,
 while they were on their Knees, the same
 posture that they used in Prayer. To this
 seriousness belongs sequestering ourselves at
 that time, when we vow from all other Se-
 cular Busineses, and entring into our Clo-
 sets, or retiring into Places where no Per-
 sons or Divertisements are like to distract us;
 a Vow requires the attention of the whole
 Mind, and he that vows while he is doing
 something else, shews he hath no mind to
 perform what his Lips have uttered. The
 Man in *Plutarch* therefore play'd the fool
 with Heaven, that vow'd he would throw
 himself from a Precipice, and when he came
 to it chang'd his Mind, and null'd the Vow
 with this Jest, *I did not think that this*

*tunc lici-
 tum ipsi est
 serum, si a
 sero, concess-
 sum est ei
 lac, si a ca-
 sero, tum ille
 prohibitus
 est ipsi, si ce-
 sit salutus,
 vel non
 salutus, &c.
 Massech.
 Nedarim.
 c. 6. Mishn.*

Εὐχὴ

*Plut. arch.
 de Lacon.
 Apophth.
 Vid. & lib.
 de ira co-
 lib.*

Vow had need of another Vow to see the first effectually perform'd. Those Heathen Philosophers he speaks of in another Place, were more rational and serious; that vow'd to abstain from their Wives, and to deny themselves of Wine for Twelve Months, and for some certain time to shun Lying and consequently to Worship God by Continence; for these Vows they made with great Solemnity, and from a Sence of Vertue and Goodness, which made them very strict in the observance of those Promises,

III. In these Vows it is fit such limitations should be added as are necessary, and may free the Mind from Scruples afterwards, when they are to be perform'd. He that vows to set aside a certain day in the Month for Fasting and Prayer, had need except Sicknes, and such other inconveniencies as may endanger his Life or Health in the performance; for if he do not when such Accidents do afterwards happen, they are apt to distract the Mind, and while the Votary is tossed between his obligation to God and the preservation of his Health, he makes his Breast like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest,

*Vid. Mas- not rest, And though some Casuists think
sech. Ne- that upon such Accidents a Man is free
darim, c. 3. from Sin if he do not keep his Vow, yet to
Mishna. 1. a Person that is very Conscientious, it is not
Er 3. so*

first satisfactory as when himself hath made these Exceptions. Had *Jeptah*, Judg. 11. observed this Rule, he had not brought that Grief and Anguish upon himself, which afterwards was ready to overwhelm him; vowing in general, that whatever should first meet him upon his return from the Slaughter of the Children of *Ammon*, he would certainly Sacrifice and Offer for a Burnt-Offering, without any limitation, *provided it be fit to be Offer'd, or provided it be no rational Creature, or provided it be of the clean Cattle that is in my possession, or provided it be not another Man's; Vowing*, I say at large, without any such Exception, when his Daughter met him, he knew not how to evade the obligation of the Vow, and therefore was forced, at least thought himself obliged, to Sacrifice his only Child, *for he did unto her, saith the Text, according to his Vow which he had vow'd*, vers. 39.

ארבעה
ודים
החירו
חנמים
ונו
Quatuor
vota sapi-
entes absol-
vunt, vota
persuasoria
vota Hy-
perbolica,
vota erro-
rum & vo-
ta necessi-
tatem pati-
entium &c.
Vota neces-
sitatem
patientium
qua sunt?
Si quem
voto ob-
strinxerit
focius suus
ut comedat
apud eum,
agrotava-
rit autem
ipse, aut
impedire-
rit eum a-
qua, &c.

IV. When such Vows are made, it's fit we should write them down in a Book, or in Paper, that we may remember what we have Vow'd, and what the particular things are, we have promis'd to the Almighty. The *Roman* Souldiers when they went to War, having made certain Vows to God, used to write them on Tables, and fasten them to the Gates of the City, that they might

might be sure upon their return to pay their Vows. Our Memories are frail and treacherous, and things are not so soon forgot when committed to Paper or a Book. The Oath God made against *Amaleck* he caused to be written in a Book, *Exod.* 17. 14. and *Samuel* wrote the manner of the Kingdom in a Book, *1 Sam.* 10. 21. and indeed remarkable Passages or Occurrences deserve no less. Sicknes, Business or Divertisements, may put things out of our Minds, whereas if they be noted, or written down, we can refresh our Memories when we please, and remember the very Circumstances we were under when we did, or saw, or met with them. Vows are actions of great concernment, writing of them down gives us fresh suggestions of the occasion of such engagements, and serves to kindle a new zeal in us to perform them. When they are once past there depends so much on the observance of them, and the performance or non-performance of them, have so great an influence upon the happiness or unhappiness even of our Lives here on Earth, that they may be very justly looked upon as things of the greatest moment, and therefore we cannot be too careful about them, and why may not writing down of our Vows be a monument of our Sincerity, Seriousness and Gratitude, as much as the Primitive Christians hanging up Boards and Cloaths in the Church, which

had

their had on them the Picture of the Joynt, or
ache- Part of the Body, where they had been dis-
when eased or distempered, after they were deli-
Oath vered, as a Testimony of their Thankful-
to be ness ?

V. *The end of these Vows must be God's Honour and Glory.* If the end be, that we may with greater liberty live in a certain Sin we delight in, the Vow is so far from tending to God's Honour, that God is despised, and thought to be altogether such a one as we ourselves. Such Vows as have no good end, I am afraid are too common in the Church of *Rome*, where Men by vowing to go in Pilgrimage to such a Saint's Shrine, or into *Jerusalem*, or to such a Chapel of our Blessed Lady, think they purchase a prerogative or privilege to continue in the darling Sins their Profit or Pleasure doth consist in, or to neglect some greater and weightier matter of the Law, and though this is call'd by their Votaries seeking God's Glory, yet whatever doth tend to the advancement or cherishing of any sin, cannot possibly tend to God's Glory, let Men's pretences be what they will; for if the bare saying that I aim at God's Glory would serve turn, who almost would be damned, especially since Men may plead, that they sin abundantly on purpose that God's Grace may abound; in these Vows destruction of the
Body

Body of sin must be chiefly aimed at ; for God is honour'd by nothing so much as by the ruine of the Devil's Kingdom.

VI. *Commutations and Dispensations of Vows must be slighted as things alien from true Religion.* These Practices are common in the Roman Church. By Commutations of Vows, they mean changing the matter of one Vow into another, *i. e.* He that hath vow'd to give so much to the Poor, changes the Vow into a Vow of Fasting, and so breaks the former Vow, and substitutes an easier or more convenient in the room of it. But these Commutations are no better than Falsifications ; for in a Vow I bind my Soul to God that I will do that particular thing I have mention'd and not another, and if God doth not release me of the performance, who was the Party I promised to, what can human Authority signify in the case? It's true, where the thing I have vow'd is either impossible or sinful, there I may lawfully make another Vow of something that is good or possible, but that doth not excuse the Sin of the first, nor is this properly a Commutation, but a Testimony of my Repentance for the rashness of the former.

The same may be said of Dispensations ; how should Man be able to dispence with
the

the non-performance of my Vow, who hath nothing to do with it, and most certainly cannot give away God's Right, who by my Vow is made absolute Owner of the Service I resolve upon, and hath so great a Propriety in it by my voluntary resignation of it to him, that it is no less than Sacrilege in man to attempt a dispensation? The Parasites of the Court of *Rome* allow the Pope, besides his pretended Power, to absolve Men of their Oaths, Power to dispense with five sorts of Vows, with Vows to enter into Orders, with Vows of entering into a Monastery and perpetual Chastity, with Vows to go in Pilgrimage to *Jerusalem*, with Vows to visit the Thresholds of the Apostles *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, and with Vows to salute *St. James of Compostella*. Though we *Protestants* justly question whether some of these Vows be lawful, and whether the matter of them be not contrary to the Will of God, yet suppose they are lawful as the Church of *Rome* holds, who gave the Pope Authority to deliver Men from the Obligations they have engaged themselves in to God Almighty? These Vows all this while are not made to the Pope, but to God, and how comes the Bishop of *Rome* to know God's Mind in this particular, or to give away God's Right? by what Title or Prerogative? We should call him Knave, that should

should tempt a Man to be false to his Word after he had past it to his Neighbour; and is it honesty to invade the Almighty's Power, and give People leave to be false to their God, when God hath given no other Rule in vowing, but paying what is vow'd to him? In Vows Promisory or Conditional, in which Man is concern'd, there if the Party concern'd releases the Person vowing, he may be excused from the actual performance of it, because in this case man is the principal Person concern'd in the Vow, and God is only made Judge and Witness: *b. e.* I vow to Almighty God solemnly, that I will pay such a Man Fifty Pounds, which I owe him. If he remit me that Sum, I am not bound to pay it; for his remitting it is as much as if I had actually paid it; and tho' the Vow was made unto God, yet it was made to him only as a Witness, not as a Proprietor, and the thing to be performed was not so much promised to be performed to him as to my Neighbour, with whom I have dealings in the World. But this justifies not Man's dispensing with a Vow made directly to God, as the Proprietor of the thing we Vow: *b. e.* If I vow that I will be sure to Pray duly with my Family at Mornings and at Nights, or that I will Catechize my Children and Servants such a day, or that I will

reprove

reprove such a man in private for his Oaths and sinful Life, &c. In such Vows no Creature in the World can dispense with my Engagements, or assure me that I shall go unpunished if I neglect the performance; for these do directly concern God and his Service, and Man is not the chief Party to whom the Promise is made, but God himself, who thereupon will expect to see the Vows fulfill'd according to the due intention of the Mind.

It's true, *Numb.* 30. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. A Father and a Husband are permitted to dispense with the Vows, the one of his Daughter, and the other of his Wife, if they hear of it, and think the dispensation necessary and convenient; but this permission cannot extend to Superiours in general, else what Honesty or Faith could be expected in the World, if Inferiours could be dispensed with by those that are above them? The Jewish Commentators restrain those Dispensations to the Vows of Fasting and Self-denial only, and so much they gather from *v.* 13. *Every Vow, and every binding Oath to afflict the Soul, her Husband may establish it, or her Husband may make it void:* But it's more probable that the Vows that might be disannull'd by the Father or Husband might be Vows concerning giving away a Sum of Money to pious and charitable uses; the

*Vid. Mas-
seck. Ne-
darim. c.
11.*

אם
ארחץ
ואם
ל
ארחץ
וני

*Hec sunt
vota quae
ille irrita
reddere po-
test si quid
sit de rebus
in quibus
est afflictio
animae, e.g.*

si quædix- rit, si la- vero me, aut si non la vero, si ornavero me, aut si non ornavero, &c. Vel si dixerit Sunt omnia mihi munus fructus mundi vel fructusbus regionis &c.

the Father and the Husband in these Cases the Propriety of the Money and Goods the House being in them, it was reasonable they should be consulted with in things of this Nature; but if they heard of such Vows and did not contradict them, they were to stand, their silence importing consent, though it may be said, that the Persons here mentioned, whose Vows might be dispensed with by their Parents and Husbands, might be Persons under Age, not arrived yet to the full use of their Reason or mature Understanding what a Vow meant; and though the *Jews* tell us that a Woman might lawfully make a Vow at a 11 Years of Age and a young Man at 12, yet we have no warrant for this belief in Scripture, and few People are so ripe at that Age, as to know or consider the Importance, End, Weight, Consequence, and Nature of so solemn an Obligation.

And having thus explained what necessary Rules are to be observed in making Religious Vows, the next thing I am to do, is to exhort you to a sober, holy, and moderate use of them, and you will not think the exhortation unreasonable, if you but reflect;

1. *That this Religious Vowing will be a great Argument of your readiness to please God;*

God; We look upon it as such in *David*: *I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy Righteous Judgments*, Psal. 119. 106. It shew'd the great proneness of this Mind to prove, what was that good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God. Readiness to please God is made in Scripture the indeleble Character of a Christian: And we are assur'd, that God judges of our Actions by this Readiness, 2 Cor. 8. 11, 12. Where this Readiness is not, Men serve God by force, and what they do in Religion, is more from fear of Judgment, than love to God's Holiness; and such Services God respects not, because the Heart is cold. Vows are Acts of Resolution, and there must be a great sence within, that draws these Promises forth. And what is this Sence and Resolution but effects of the Soul's readiness to express the esteem it has of God's Favours. He that vows an Act of Devotion, breaks through Difficulties, and there is not a better sign, that the Heart is ready to please its great Owner, than when it can wade through Hardships to do him Service.

2. *These Religious Vows are signs of the Heart's sincerity.* Signs, that we do not play fast and loose with God, that our hatred against Sin is not feign'd, nor our Anger counterfeit; that we do not only pretend willingness to part with our Lusts, but

A a

have

have in sober sadness determin'd their destruction. Sincerity of Heart is so much insisted on by the Holy Ghost, that the most specious Acts of Worship are rejected as dung, while they come not attended with this qualification. By a Vow a Man resolves to put a stop to Sin, and shews that he will have no off's and on's, but intends to silence and hush the sinful desire for ever, and this is honest, done like a *Nathaniel*, an *Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile*, John 1. 47.

3. *These Vows put us upon some straits and are therefore the better sign that we enter in at the strait Gate, and walk in the narrow Way that leads to Life.* A Man hath very great reason to suspect his Religion, which doth not put his Flesh to Inconveniencies, nor obliges him to any Self-denial. A Vow drives the Soul into a narrow Path, and restrains her freedom, eyes her up to a Law, and by that Law she must go, and dares not swerve or deviate from it, and yet it is a pleasing Bondage, and the Soul voluntarily yields to the Yoak, to a void being dissolute. 'Twas generously said of *David* to *Araunah*, 2 Sam. 24. 24. *will not offer Burnt-Offerings unto the Lord my God, of that which cost me nothing*: So must a Christian say, I will not walk in a *Way*, but what hath some straitness in it, and since these Vows do signally pinch Flesh

and

and Blood, and confine it to boundaries and limits, they yield this Satisfaction, that we are in a likely way to be sav'd.

In a Word, by such Holy Vows we assure our Hearts, that we do not take Sin to be such a harmless thing as the World makes of it, and that we have other Apprehensions of Religion, than careless Sinners have, and that we do in good earnest believe, that God's Word is of great weight, and will be infallibly fulfill'd; That we do not allow of Hypocrisy, nor think that Devotion consists altogether in making clean the outside of the Cup and Platter; That we value the Examples of Saints more than the Customs of the World, and are resolv'd to be guided more by the Actions of a few mortify'd Men, than by the inconsiderate things of a Multitude.

4. But then, if we enter into such Holy Vows, let's dread Violation of them, as we would do committing the blackest Villanies, which is the *Fourth Particular* I am to treat of. And the breaking of them will appear very dreadful if we reflect,

1. That this Violation is no less than Perjury. A Vow and an Oath are much of the same Nature, and accordingly in *Scripture*, they are us'd promiscuously one for the other, *Numb.* 30. 13. For though it is said that a Vow is made only to God, and an Oath many times both to God and Man, yet

still in both God is made Witness, Judge, and Revenger: What some of the *Papists* say in this Case, that the *Pope* can Dispense with a Vow and not with an Oath, is Childish, and unworthy a rational Man's disquisition. He can dispence with neither, and it is nothing but downright flattery in the *Canonists* and *Decretalists* to tell him he can do either the one or the other. Since God makes them to be one and the same thing why should we invent distinctions, to make them different; and being the same, if we presume to violate a Vow we have made, we cannot possibly avoid the guilt of Perjury, a Sin so great, that in its heinousness it goes beyond Adultery and Murder: beyond Adultery, because in this the Crime is immediately committed against our Neighbours, but in the breach of Vows it is immediately levelled against God's Nature: Beyond Murder, because in this a Command of the second Table is willfully broken, but in Perjury, a Precept of the first, which as it concerns God immediately, so it is of great dignity and consequence, not to mention that in Perjury Men deny God's Wisdom, Knowledge, and taking notice of their monstrous Sin: It is true in all Sins, the Sinner is guilty of this Contempt, but in this more especially, because God is appeal'd to, as knowing the very secrets of the Heart, which Faith is manifestly and desperately deny'd in

Vid. Sto-
næum,
Serm. 28.
de perjurio.

in violation of such Vows, and turns the Crime into Blasphemy.

2. This Violation of Vows is a thing, which the very Heathens have abhorr'd, the most Idolatrous People in the World have dreaded it, as one of the greatest Enormities Man can possibly be guilty of; which made one of them say merrily, that such Men as break their Vows, had need get themselves new Gods, for the old Ones would never let so great a Crime pass unreveng'd: They have writ Books against it, Declaim'd against it, and thought it Rational, that Persons who make so bold with the Almighty, should be banish'd from Human Societies. They have detested such Violations, as things contrary to the Instinct of Human Nature, doom'd such Sinners to notorious Punishments, and left them to the All-revenging Eye of Heaven.

3. And indeed, he that hath been no careless Spectator, Reader, or Observer of Affairs in the World, cannot be ignorant, how severely God hath in this Life punish'd such presumptuous Violations: Men that have dar'd to be so hellishly bold, have either come to some fearful end, or have suffer'd signally in their Estates, or Fortune, or Reputation, or have fallen into strange Terrors, and Anguish of Conscience, or have been forc'd like *Cain* to be Vagabonds on Earth, and even then, when they have fled from

one place to another, to hide their shame, Vengeance hath follow'd them, so dangerous a thing it is to play with a Consuming Fire.

Myself have known Persons, who, upon the breach of their Vows, have fallen into that disconsolate dejected Condition, that they have run into Despair, and turn'd a deaf Ear to all the Comforts of the Gospel, Something within hath sate heavy on their Hearts, and in the midst of their Health they have consum'd and pined away, and no Drugs of Apothecaries, no Medicines of Physicians, no kind Addresles of their Friends have been able to bring their Minds to any Calmness and Serenity, but they have roll'd on from one pensive Thought to another, till at last they have been ready to lay violent Hands upon themselves, and like *Judas*, toss'd from one place to another, have not been able to exchange their Pain with their Place.

4. This Violation of our Vows, is a kind of Challenging God's Vengeance. It looks as if we dared the Almighty, defy'd his Thunder, and mock'd his Arm of Justice; for when we make a Vow, we do as good as desire God to revenge our Violation if we break it, and therefore to break it wilfully must needs participate of contempt and undervaluing of his Vengeance, as if he either durst not, or could not punish it; or had so

little

little regard to his Honour and Justice, as to
 et such Enormities go scot-free: Such Sins
 truly interpreted, will look very big, and
 the Consequences be consider'd, it will be
 found, that they intrench strangely upon
 God's Honour and Prerogative. This makes
 Men generally so afraid of breaking their
 Vows, that they even venture to perform
 rash and inconsiderate Vows, thinking it sa-
 fer to keep them, than by violation to put
 such notorious Affronts upon him that dwel-
 leth in the Heavens. And against this Vio-
 lation is that severe Warning of Solomon,
*Ecclef. 5. 4. When thou vowest a Vow un-
 to God, defer not to pay it, for he hath no
 pleasure in Fools; Pay that which thou
 hast vowed: Better it is that thou should-
 est not Vow, than that thou shouldest vow
 and not pay.*

Such Men as do not pay are Fools in-
 deed, for they seek to put a Cheat upon the
 Almighty, and to deceive him, whose Eyes
 are like Flames of Fire, and behold both the
 inside and outside of their Hearts. Silly
 Wretches! As if a Grashopper could circum-
 vent a Giant, or a poor Worm outwit the
 greatest Sages. Such Follies meet with
 Judgments of the same Nature, and as such
 Sinners mock the Most High, so he also will
 laugh at their Calamity, and mock when
 their Fear comes, *Prov. 1. 26.*

5. If we break the Vows we make to God, What Man can trust us after that ; if this Perfidiousness be known, if we are Treacherous to our God, how should we keep Faith with Men ? If we are unfaithful in greater Matters, who will commit the lesse to our Trust ? When *Constantius*, *Constantine's* Father, had given order, that such *Christians* as would not Sacrifice to the *Heathen* Gods should depart his Court, but those that Offer'd Incense to Idols might stay ; and not a few, for fear of losing their Places hereupon Offer'd Incense, while others quitted all they had, rather than they would fight against God ; he generously call'd those back who had laid down their Employments upon the account of Conscience, and chose them for his Friends, and banish'd the other, that had consented to his Unjust Decree, saying *That Men who were not true to their God could never be true to their Prince* : And the same may be said of these Violations of Solemn Promises made to the Almighty. Men that can deal so unworthily with him, How should they deal honestly with their Neighbours ? So that in breaking our Vows, we cancel that Obligation, which must make us honest in our Dealings ; and should all Men do so, Human Societies would soon come to an end, and all things drop into Disorder and Confusion,

6. How can God believe us, after such violations of our Vows, in case afterward we come to stand in need of his help, and to move him to Pity, fall a Promising again? How justly may God answer, as he did the *Israelites* in a Case much like it, *Go and cry to the Gods whom ye have served, for I will deliver you no more*, Jud. 10. 13, 14. How justly may God reply upon this occasion, You shall Cheat me, you shall Cozen me, you shall Impose upon me no more. How should I believe your Promises now, that have falsify'd your Word already? This many a Man hath found, and after having basely violated his Vows, when afterwards he hath come to lie upon his Death-Bed, and cry'd out for Mercy, God hath stop'd his Ears, and as good as said, *When you stretch forth your Hands, I will hide mine Eyes, and when you make many Prayers, I will not hear you, for your Hands are full of Blood*, as he said to the *Jews*, Isa. 1. 15.

It is said of *Esau*, Heb. 12. 17. *That he sought the Inheritance of his Brother's Blessing carefully with Tears, but found no place of Repentance*, i.e. With all his Tears and Prayers, he could not make his aged Father undo what he had done, or take away the Blessing from him, to whom he had already imparted it: And truly, after such violations of our Vows, we have reason to fear, that God will deny us that Grace we beg for
in

in the time of our Extremity, or that we shall be given up to a Hard Heart, and Reprobate Mind, for making so light of God's Purity and Holiness; we may justly fear, that God will not set much by our Prayers and Supplications, when we come to stand in need of his Gracious Looks, and Influences.

I could add here, That a Person that breaks his Vows, or makes no Conscience of keeping them, knows not where he shall stop in Sin, for no Sin after this can come amiss to him, he is prepar'd for every Evil Work, for Murder, Adultery, Deceit, and all other Wickedness; and is now ready to do any thing the Devil bids him. But what hath been said shall suffice. I conclude this Point with St. *Austin's* Words in his *Epistle to Paulinus*, *Having once Vow'd, thou art no more thine own Master, and thou darest not do otherwise; if thou do not what thou hast Promised, thou art infinitely worse than thou wert, before thou didst Vow. Thou hadst not then been worse, but onely less holy; but if thou break'st thy Word with God, thou art more wretched and miserable; and therefore how much happier wilt thou be, if thou performest it.*

The Prayer.

O Blessed *Jesu!* to whom I have so often promised Faithfulness, and Allegiance, and Obedience! How justly may'st thou look
upon

pon me, betwixt Pity and Anger, as thou
didst upon Peter when he had most shame-
fully deny'd thee! And O that thy Looks
may have the same effect upon me, that they
had upon thy Apostle, and I might weep bit-
terly: For how light have I made of my most
solemn Promises! How have I sought to im-
pose upon thee, O my God! How have I eva-
ded the Obligations my Resolutions have laid
upon me, and sometimes downright broke those
Promises! Ah treacherous Creature that I
am; how can I expect thou shouldest per-
form thy Promises made to me, when I am
so careless of observing and performing of
mine to thee! Thou art infinitely Patient;
therefore I am not yet destroyed. Hencefor-
ward, when I promise thee, let thy Majesty,
Greatness, Justice, and Holiness prevail
with me to break with thee no more. O let
me not think because thou art silent, and
doest not presently punish my Perfidiousness,
that thou art altogether such a one as my
self. O instruct me, that I may entertain
greater thoughts of thee! If I enter into a
Vow at any time, assist me powerfully with
thy Spirit, that I may act according to the
Word that is gone out of my Lips. As I make
thee my Judge and Witness in my Vows, so
let me remember that my Witness is Omnif-
cient, and my Judge hath Magazines of
Vengeance at command. Let me undergo
any inconvenience rather than be false to my

En-

Engagements. O keep me by thy might Power, that my Heart may be treacherous no more. O let me remember what Mercies I expect at thy Hands, and let me not forfeit my Right to thy Favour. When I bind my Soul, let me think that nothing can undo it but thy self. O preserve in my Mind a just sense of my Duty, and of the necessity of pleasing thee. Let me abhor every Thought that would prompt me to violate this sacred Bond. O let me look upon it as a most holy thing, and let me dread all profanation of it. As I design, O Lord, by these Vows to bring up my Will to thy Will, so be thou entreated to second my Designs, and to keep my Soul, that I yield not to Temptations of Perfidiousness, but may Triumph over my Corruptions, and be more than a Conqueror through him that loved me, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with thee and the Holy Spirit, be all Honour and Glory, Worlds without end. Amen.

II. *Extraordinary Exercise.*

Fasting. An Exercise commanded, and recommended, *Joel* 2. 15. *Mat.* 6. 16, 17, 18, 19. *Luke* 2. 37. *Acts* 13. 2. *1 Cor.* 7. 5. By *Fasting*, I mean, either a total Abstinence from Meat and Drink, or where Nature is not able to bear it, Abstinence from all pleasant Food, or palatable Meat and Drink, for both

both these fall under the Notion of *Fasting*, as we see, *Dan.* 10. 3. And the end of this Abstinence must be sequestering our Thoughts from the World, or dedicating our selves to God, which makes it a Religious Fast, and a Fast that God hath chosen, and an Exercise unto Godliness; without this Qualification, *Fasting*, comes not within the Compass of Religious Exercises; and he that Fasts to cure a Surfeit, or to get himself a better Stomach, or because the Physician and his Constitution requires it, does God no Service by it, but only gratifies himself.

Fasts are commonly distinguish'd into publick and private, and as the publick are Com-
manded and Ordered, either by the civil Magistrates or the Governors of the Church, either to prevent a publick Judgment, or to remove it, if it be already come; or to keep up the Memory of some dreadful Calamity, that hath formerly oppressed a People, so private is instituted and managed, either by Masters of Families, or by private Christians, to quicken themselves in Duty: And these private Fasts are the things that I shall chiefly press and insist upon, not but that a Christian is obliged cheerfully to embrace the Opportunity of publick Humiliations, but they being order'd but seldom, his Religious Concerns lay a Necessity upon him to use this Exercise more frequently in the place where he dwells, or sojourns.

Nor

Jon. 3. 6, 7.
Episcopi
universæ
plebi man-
dare jeju-
nia assolent
Tertul.
adv. Pys.
chic. c. 13.

Nor is this a New Exercise, we charge upon you, but such a one as the Church of God hath, in all Ages, made use of to obtain God's Favour, and the Light of his Countenance. The *Jewish Church*, after that *Moses* had led the way in Fasting Forty Days, and Forty Nights, soon learn'd to keep Days of Abstinence upon the Account of Devotion. Indeed, God himself shew'd them the necessity of this Exercise, when *Levit. 16. 29.* he gave them order to afflict their Souls, *i. e. to Fast* on the tenth Day of the seventh Month or *September*, by a Statute for ever. This wasthe great Day of Expiation; and they not only abstained from Meat, Drink, Ornaments, curious Dresses, and all manner of Pleasures, but went barefoot, confessed their Sins, bewailed them, and cry'd mightily unto God, to be merciful to them for his Name's sake, or for the *Messias* sake, who was to come, and expiate their Sins by his own Blood.

But here they did not rest; and God having once acquainted them, that he was delighted with such Humiliations and Abasements, if rightly managed, they began now to make use of them upon all occasions, when any signal Calamity invaded the Land, as appears from the *Proclamation* of King *Jehoshaphat*, *2 Chron. 20. 3.* and by what *Esther* did, by the Advice of *Mordecai*, *Esther 4. 16.* and we may suppose, private Men, when any Pressures, or Miseries threat-

ned

ned them, did the like. Not long after, when God thought fit to pour out his Wrath upon *Jerusalem*, and the Inhabitants thereof, and the goodly Temple was destroy'd and burnt down to the Ground, the *Jews* thought themselves obliged to make more frequent use of this Exercise, and accordingly they Instituted Four Solemn Anniversary Fasts. The *First* they appointed to be in the Fourth Month, or in *June*, in memory of the Breach made in the Wall of the City of *Jerusalem* by the *Chaldean* Army, *Fer.* 52. 2. The *Second* in the Fifth Month, or in *July*, in memory of the Burning of the Temple, and of the whole City of *Jerusalem*, *Fer.* 52. 13. The *Third* in the Seventh Month, or *September*, in memory of the murther'd *Gedaliah*, upon whose Death follow'd the *DISPERTION* of the *Jews*, *Fer.* 41. 1, 2. The *Fourth* in *December*, or the Tenth Month, in Memory of *Nebuchadnezzar's* besieging the City of *Jerusalem*, *2 Kings* 25. 1. And these Yearly Fasts they did punctually observe, not only in their First Captivity, or Exile, but after that *Cyrus* had given them leave to return into their own Country, even unto the time of *Darius Hystaspes*. And two of these Fasts the Prophet *Zachary* takes particular Notice of, as most remarkable, *viz.* that of the Fifth and Seventh Month, *Zach.* 7. 5.

This

The Best Exercise.

This Devotion, as Men among the *Jews* began to separate themselves from their Neighbours into Societies, and undertook to lead a stricter Life than the Croud, so it increased signally, and Fasting became a Characteristick of Men, eminently Religious, which makes the *Pharisee* afterwards, *Luke* 18.12. say, *that he fasted twice in the Week* i. e. *Mondays* and *Thursdays*, because that on the fifth Day of the Week *Moses* ascended to the Mount of God, and on the Second he returned from thence, a Custom which the Son of God doth not mislike, though it was a voluntary Institution, but finds fault only with their insisting on these outward Observations, while they neglected the greater Works of *Charity*.

The *Christians* having learn'd this piece of Devotion among the *Jews*, soon improved it, and because they would not be outdone by the *Pharisees* in Fasting, resolved to Fast two Days in the Week, as well as they, but changed the Days, and pitch'd, upon *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, because that on *Wednesday* the *Jews* took Council together, how to murder Christ, and on *Friday*, the Saviour of the World dy'd. And these two

Vid. Iren. standing Fasts the Christians in *Tertullian's*
Clem. Alex. time used to call *Stations*, because they went
Tertull. Ep. to Church on those Days, and staid there
Albasp. Ob- till the Ninth Hour, or Three of the Clock
servat. lib. i. c. 47. 48, in the Afternoon, and some, as *Montanus* his
 49. Disciples,

Disciples, till Night, which makes *Tertul-
lian*, when he became a *Montanist*, call the
Fasts of those that fasted only till three of
the Clock, *Stationum semijejunia*, half
Fasts, or half Stations; and though the
Word *Station* seems to import Standing, yet
they did not so much stand in Prayer on
those Days, as lie prostrate upon the Ground;
and because they spent those Days in Mourn-
ing, and Confessing their Sins, they call'd
them Stations, from the Toil and Hardship
of Soldiers, which stand Centry in cold and
frosty Nights, and undergo the various
storms of Wind and Weather.

And indeed, about this time, the Discipline
of Fasting became so rigorous, that Men
broke into *Schisms*, and divided from the
Church, not about Points of Doctrine, as
they do now, but about strictness of Life, and
tried one with the other in Fasting and Absti-
nence; and I am apt to believe, that while
these Disputes about Fasting were very hot,
that the Christians here and there might be-
gin to bethink themselves of an imitation of
Christ's Fast, and began to practise the Qua-
dragesimal or Lent-Fast, for being jeer'd by
Montanus his Disciples, that they fasted only
forty Hours, *i. e.* on *Good Friday* and the
Saturday before *Easter*, during the time that
the Bridegroom was taken away from them,²
and continued in the Grave, they, unwilling
to be out-done by *Schismaticks*, might think

*Tertull. de
Jejun. c. 1.*

Cassian.
collat. 21.
c. 30. &
August. Ep.
86. ad Ca-
Julan.

Euseb. Hist.
Ecll. 1. 1.
c. 23.

Basil. E-
pist. ad E-
pisc. Sebast.
Hieron.
vit Pauli
c. 5.
August. de
morib. Ec-
cles. Hie-
ron. de vit.
Hilarion.
c. 6.

of enlarging their Days of Abstinence, and by degrees from two Days came to four, from four to six, from six to fourteen, and from fourteen to forty; for, as in St. *Austin's* Judgment, the Apostles left no certain Rules for Fasting Days, so it seems more than probable from *Irenaeus* his Testimony in *Eusebius*, that before this time, the Christians, some fasted but one, some two, some forty Hours only before *Easter*.

What we read of the Fasts of Christians in the following Centuries, especially the Third, Fourth and Fifth, is very stupendous, for St. *Basil*, St. *Jerom*, and St. *Austin*, assure us, that not a few Christians in those Days would fast three Days together, and neither eat nor drink any thing, till the third Day at Night, not to eat or drink at all, or to fast every Day till Night was a very common thing then, and no Man counted that Abstinence any great Matter. Of *Hilarion*, saith St. *Jerom*, that from the one and twentieth to the seven and twentieth Year of his Age, he lived for three Years upon a sort of Pulse called Lentiles, soften'd only in cold Water, and the three other Years upon dry Bread, and Salt, and Water, from seven and twenty to thirty he sustain'd himself only with Herbs, and raw Roots, that grew wild in the Field, from 30 to 35, his Dyet was a little Barly-Bread, and Colworts, without any Sauce; but finding his Eye-sight decay upon that Self-denial, he

added

added Oyl by way of Sauce to his Herbs, and so run on in his Race till he was 63, tasting of neither Apples nor Pulse nor any other thing; from 63 to 83 his Diet were no more than Sops made of Meal and Herbs; and yet as slender as this Diet was, he never eat till Sunset. Thus far *St. Jerom*, and he protests, and appeals to *Jesus* and his holy Angels, as Witnesses of the truth of what he saith, that about *Syria* he hath seen Persons, of whom one having shut himself up in a Cave for thirty Years together, liv'd upon nothing but Barley Bread and muddy Water; and another in another Cottage made his Meal a Days of nothing but five dry Figs.

To that height of Maceration, and crucifying of the Flesh, did Fasting come in those Ages; and though I am not bound to believe all that Antiquity hath written about the miraculous Fasts of Men, how *Ammonius* did never eat any thing that was boyled, or baked, or roasted; how *Conon* for thirty Years together did eat but once a Week, how *Eusebius* liv'd upon fifteen dry Figs forty Days, how one *John* was supported without Food ten Years, how *Maria Egyptica* had nothing to Feed upon for seventeen Years together, but three Loaves of Bread; how *Pityrion* did eat but twice a Week, how *Polycronius* hath been known to fast seven Days together, how *Posidonius* eat no Bread in forty Years, &c. Though, I say, I am not bound to be-

lieve all these, and such-like Passages, Antiquity hath left upon Record; yet without controversy, the Abstinence of Men in those Times was wonderous great, voluntary Abstinence I mean, for nothing put them upon it but Religion, and a desire of a more endeavouring Converse with the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

And though it would be in vain, and next to ridiculous to desire any of my Readers to tread in the steps of these Gyants in Fasting, yet I must with very great Seriousness exhort *you*, that are not ashamed of being Christians, to make Religious Abstinence your more frequent Exercise; and to this purpose it will be convenient to speak something of the time, and occasion, when this Exercise is most proper. 1. How it must be manag'd. And, 2. What it is that makes it necessary.

1. Of the Time and Occasion, when this Exercise may be most proper: And here the best Rule to go by is the Scripture, and Examples of Saints, and these will inform us, that it is proper at any time, and the oftner the better, but particularly,

1. When we lie under some Temporal Afflictions, whether the Affliction consist in losses, or in the malice, hatred, or ill-will of Men, or in some other crosses and disappointments, that may befall us in this World. In such Cases *David* ever had recourse to this Exercise,

Exercise, as we see, *Psal. 69. 10, 11.* and acknowledged the Justice of God, confessed God did him no wrong in suffering such Troubles to seize upon him, pray'd for mitigation of his misery, or for deliverance, and he fasted on purpose that his Prayers might be more piercing. The same thing he did when his Child lay sick, *2 Sam. 12. 16. He besought God for the Child, and fasted, and lay all Night upon the Earth:* Fasting is an acknowledgment of our vileness, and he that abstains from Meat and Drink upon a Religious account, confesses that he hath deserv'd to be starv'd to death; and it is natural for Mankind to believe, that such humiliations and abasements are prevalent with the Deity.

II. *When any of our Friends, or Relations, or Neighbours, fall into more than ordinary trouble,* our compassion and tenderness to their disconsolate estate is best express'd by Fasting, Supplications, and in this also *David's* Example is remarkable, who went so far in his Charity, as to Fast even for seeming Friends, but real Enemies, *Psal. 35. 13. But as for me, when they were sick, my cloathing was Sackcloth; I humbled my Soul with Fasting, and my Prayer returned into my own Bosom,* i. e. was answer'd, and heard, and they were deliver'd. Selfishness hath so prevail'd in the Age we live in, that we think it scarce worth the trouble of a Fast, to procure God's Mercy for ourselves, much less

for others. Good Lord! What an unbelieving World is this! Men believe not that God will work any mighty Work upon their Fasting, and therefore slight it. Heretofore Men believ'd it, and saw Wonders, and God blessed them, and was entreated not only for them, but for their Neighbours and Relations too.

III. *When we would be rid of any inordinate Lust or Affection*; Fasting in these Cases weakning the Body, weakens such Lusts and Affections too, which have too great dependance upon the Body, and are more vigorous, as the Body is pamper'd and gratify'd, and what Christ says of the evil Spirit, *Matth. 17. 21.* may be most truly apply'd to such Lusts, *This kind goes not out but by Fasting and Prayer.* Those Lusts are certainly Enemies to our Souls, for they war against them in St. Peter's Phrase, *1 Pet. 2. 11.* and as a General that means to take a strong Town, cuts off their Provision, and will not suffer any Corn or other Provision to be carry'd thither, whence it comes to pass, that the Enemy must necessarily at last yield himself, so inordinate Lusts must be starv'd out, and if you bring a Famine upon them, you take away their strength, and deprive them of their courage, and briskness, said *Moses* in *Ruffinus*, for what is stronger than a Lion, yet let him want his Food and he becomes as weak as the feeblest Animal.

*Ruffin. 1.
3. de vit.
Menach.
Sect. 66.*

IV. *When*

IV. *When we stand in need of Grace; or some Virtuous Habit, or of Conquest of some particular Temptation.* In this Case Abstinence is exceeding profitable, not that our empty Stomachs do in their own Nature contribute towards it, but the Abstinence fits us for Seriousness; that Seriousness for Earnestness, that Earnestness for God's Favour. And therefore it was that the Angel told *Daniel*, Dan. 10. 12. *From the first Day that thou didst set thy Heart to understand, and to abstain thy self before God, thy Words were heard,* to shew that fasting fits the Soul for fervent Prayer, and God denies nothing to such Intercessions, *Jam. 5. 16.* And indeed, where Men so esteem the Grace of God, as to take pains for it, God's Arms are ever open to them, for what the Heathens observ'd long ago, holds true still, *To the Industrious God denies nothing.* Nothing discovers our esteem of a thing, so much as our contentedness to undergo some hardship for it, and while we deny our Bodies often the satisfaction they crave, they learn by degrees to be more obedient to Faith and Reason, and consequently are less impediments to those Graces which require a Soul, that can live above sense, and sublunary Objects. Hence *David* to learn contentedness in Adversity, though exceeding dry, yet would not drink the Water that his *Grandeers* fetch'd for him from the Well of *Bethlehem*,

Dei omnia laboribus vendunt.

Diodor. Si-
cul. in Me-
nag. Not.
ad Diog.
Laert. lib.
8.

2 Sam. 23. 16. and in imitation of him, some in the Primitive Church to learn chearfulness in Want, when they have almost long'd for a certain sort of Food, and have got it, yet being unwilling to taste of it, though their Appetite was eager after it; and for this very reason I think it was, that the *Pythagoreans* us'd to sit down at a Table full of the greatest Dainties and Varieties, and with coming Stomachs too, and in the midst of their hunger and greediness after Meat, and rose from Table, and forbore eating, or caus'd all to be taken away, and continu'd fasting, and all to learn Self-conquest, and to get their Souls more rais'd above the World.

V. When we undertake any great Work or Office, it's very fit to consecrate it with a Fast. So *Christ* enter'd upon his Office of Prophet with Fasting, *Matth.* 4. 1, 2. and *St. Paul* and *Barnabas*, when ordain'd to be Preachers of the Word, began that tremendous Work with Fasting and Prayer, *Acts* 13. 3. a thing so decent, that the very Heathens have seen the necessity of it, which was the reason why those that were a going to consult the Oracle, were obliged to fast, and those that were to be admitted to Sacrifice or Minister to the *Aegyptian Isis*, were commanded to fast ten Days, and those that were to be Priests of *Jupiter* were ordered to abstain from all Flesh, and things that were heated by Fire, and they among the

Herod. lib.
2 cap. 40.
Plutarch
de Isid. &
Osu.

Indian

The Best Exercise.

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Indian Philosophers, that were initiated into the Service or Worship of the Sun, must drink neither Wine, nor eat any Flesh; and *Amphiaraus* laid it down as a Rule, that those that came to receive and give the true and clear meaning of the Oracles, must debar themselves of a Food one whole Day, and three Days besides of Wine.

VI. *When the Church of God is groaning under Persecution, or some other grievous Oppression.* This obliged the Man of Desires, the Prophet *Daniel*, to retire frequently, seeing the *Temple* and City of *Jerusalem* lie desolate and in rubbish, he fasted often, deprecating God's Wrath and Indignation against his People, *Dan.* 10. 3. and

Volaterran
lib. 13.
cap. 55.

on the same account *St. Cyprian* applied himself to this Exercise, when the Church was grievously afflicted by the *Pagans*, and good reason, that he who is a Member of the Church, should make the Church's Concern his own, and burn as it were, when that burns, and be weak when that is weak, and be afflicted when that is afflicted. So much the relation every private Christian hath to that Mystical Body doth import, without which he is no Member, but an excrement of that Body, as Warts and Wens are in Bodies natural, Deformities rather than Ornaments, and which merit resection more than conversation. The *Heathens* themselves when frightened with the Prodigies of Heaven, instituted

Cyprian
Epist. 8.
15.

instituted a Fast to the Honour of the Gods *Ceres*. Whether they had this way of Worship from the *Jews*, or from the dictate of the Law of Nature, is not material. It shews how ready wise Men are to commiserate the publick Necessities, and to express their Sympathy by Fasting.

VII. *When a Sinner first turns from his evil Ways*: Nothing can beautify his Soul more than this Abstinence, whereby he confesses his demerit, that God might justly take away his Holy Spirit for ever from him, the true Food of his Soul, and that which must preserve him unto Salvation. So much the Prophet *Joel* intimates, when he bids such Men as in good earnest turn to God, make fasting part of that Mortification, *Joel* 2. 12. Turning to God is giving what Demonstration we can of the sincerity of our Repentance, and hatred of Sin, and abhorrency of ourselves. So that fasting being part of that demonstration, it must not be left out. *Abab* himself, though a notorious Hypocrite, yet was sensible that there could be no turning to God without this Exercise, which made him when he heard the Words of *Elijah*, apply himself to Repentance, and to give some Demonstrations of its being extraordinary, and as he thought sincere, *He rent his Cloaths, and put sackcloth upon his Flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly*, 1 Kings 21. 27.

VIII. *Where a Man has been guilty of some notorious Sin, as Murder, Adultery, Fornication, Oppression, Blasphemy, Atheism, &c.* and repents, it is fit he should keep a fast now and then, to represent unto himself the dreadfulnes of his Sin, and the infinite patience of God; and what a Mercy it is that God hath turned him from Darkness into Light, and from the Power of Satan into God. Such Sins eat deep into the Soul, and they had need be remember'd often, and our detestation of them had need be express'd frequently by holy Abstinence; they are enough to damp all hopes of Comfort, enough to deprive us of God's Presence by Grace, and of his Presence in Glory. They are Sins that let in all the Host of Hell, and the Soul must fall very low, before the Devil can have such mastery over her. The horror of such Sins require frequent Compunctions, frequent Compunctions are caus'd by frequent Abstinence, and that makes fasting necessary on such occasions. In all probability *David's* Fasts were more frequent than ordinary after his commission of Murder and Adultery, and when we hear him complain, *My Knees are weak through Fasting*, Psal. 109. 24. and *I wept and chastened my Soul with Fasting*, Psal. 69. 10. We may justly conclude, that these Exercises had relation to the Sins we have mention'd.

2. And

2. And having said so much of the time when this Exercise may be most proper, must in the next place let you see, how it must be manag'd.

And 1. As I said in the beginning, *In such Fasts there must be a forbearing of all Meat and Drink.* To forbear Flesh and to eat Fish is no Fast at all, for this is but changing one Delicacy for another, and the same may be said of Wine and Sweetmeats, which the *Papists* make use of in their Fasts, while they will taste no Broath, no Eggs, nor any thing that has relation to Flesh. These are the best are mock-Fasts, and are so far from serving to elevate the Mind, that the fumes of such Dainties oppress it as much as Flesh will do. The ancient *Christians* indeed used their *Encephalias*, sometimes in their Fasts, especially in the Week before *Easter*, which consisted in eating those things which had little or no juice in them, but that was but just to support Nature from fainting, there being little nourishment in them, and in imitation of those *Christians*, a Man may in his Fasts make use of Bread and Water, or small Beer, if Nature will bear no emptiness, and yet may be truly said to Fast, because it is an Abstinence from all pleasant Food; but to Fast in Wine and Fish, is to play the *Epicure*, not to represent the *Hermit*.

2. *These Fasts must not be broke till the Evening.* The *Grecians* and *Coptite Christians*

at this Day seldom extend their Fasts beyond three or four of the Clock in the Afternoon, and usually break them when Evening Prayer is ended, and though the Primitive Christians us'd to do so on their weekly Fasts, *i. e.* on Wednesdays and Fridays, yet in other Fasts they protracted and prolong'd them even to Sun-set, and some to a much longer time, as I shew'd before, those that did heretofore Fast only till three of the Clock in the Afternoon, it's like might take that Custom from *Cornelius*, Acts 10. who seems to say, that he was fasting till the ninth Hour, which is the time we speak of, though others think that he fasted four Days together: But the usual measure of such Abstinence is the Evening, or when the Artificial Day is at an end, not that there is any great stress to be laid on the precise Hour, but that the Examples of the best Men, are the best Patterns in Points of Discipline.

3. *In such Fasts our particular Sins and Neglects must be thought upon, confessed, lamented, aggravated, and deplored*; for such Days, are true Humiliation Days, and nothing is like to make us so humble as the consideration of our Offences, and Demerits, and the Wrath of God, which is due to us thereupon; Sin, if seriously view'd in all its Consequences, will certainly appear very dreadful, odious, and intollerable, and will shew

shew us what monstrous Creatures we are and that is enough to humble us even into hatred of ourselves, and accordingly this was the Custom of old, *Neh. 9. 1. 16, 17. Dan. 9. 3, 4, 5.* and that is the reason why such Fasts are sometimes express'd by mourning and weeping only, because mourning for Sin which hath provok'd the Almighty, must be one principal part in this Exercise, *Zach. 7. 3.*

4. *In such Fasts Supplications and Deprecations must be made for the Nation we live in, and indeed for all Mankind; Supplications for their Amendment and Pardon. Deprecations that God would avert the Judgments they have deserv'd:* For such Humiliations must infuse Tendernefs and Compassion into us; if they do not, they are not of the right stamp; if I am truly sensible of my own Sins, I cannot but pity my Neighbours, my Relations, my Acquaintance, and other Men who are involv'd in the same Misery, and are as liable to the Anger of God, as myself; and if I have any pity or compassion for myself, I cannot but have pity for others too; but how doth my pity shew itself, but by becoming Intercessor for them as well as for myself; and though I am the principal Person that want Mercy on such occasions, yet my Fellow Christians must not be left out, except I can see Men drown-
ing

ing without being concern'd, whether they have a Deliverer or no.

5. *In such Fasts, the Word of God must be diligently read, and read with great attention*; especially such portions of Scripture, as contain some of the severest Threatnings of God and his Commands, which we have been most negligent of, and upon such Passages reflections must be made, and those Threatnings and Commands apply'd to ourselves, and our Hearts ask'd, how they feel themselves affected with these Commination, and whether they are sensible of their Errors; as the *Eunuch* of the Queen of *Æthiopia* said to *Philip*, *Of whom doth the Prophet speak, of himself or of another Man*: *Acts* 8. 34. so when these Threatnings occur the interrogation must be, *Of whom doth God speak, of me or of another*? Am not I guilty of the same Sin, and may not I justly think he speaks of me, as well as of another? Such Portions of Scripture are *Levit.* 26. *Deut.* 28. *Psal.* 6. 25. 38. 51. 103. 130. 143. *Ezr.* 9. *Nehem.* 9. *Matth.* 5, 6, 7. *Dan.* 9. *Rom.* 12, 13. *Ephes.* 4. 5, 6. Those who cannot read may spend the more time in meditating of what they have heard or know.

6. *With these Devotions in such Fasts praises of God may be mingled now and then, and God's various Blessings laid open to our view, that we may learn to admire his Goodness, and our strange Ingratitude, and in this the Israelites*

Israelites in Nehemiah, are our Precedents of whose Fast we read, that they divided the Day of their Fast into four parts, one part they consecrated to confessions of Sin, the second to reading the Word of God, the third to thanksgiving and praising God, the fourth it's like to begging Blessings Spiritual and Temporal for themselves, and for their Brethren, *Nehem. 9. 1, 2, 3.* An excellent Pattern, and which if follow'd may keep us from being tired with devotion on such Occasions.

7. *In such Fasts, holy, serious, and gracious thoughts are absolutely necessary*; thoughts suitable to that Mortification, and the great concern we are about; for as we need not lie upon our Faces all Day, but may lawfully rise sometimes and walk, so that walking or while we are not reading, or praying, our Minds must be busy with Contemplations of our spiritual Wants, and the ways and means how they may be supplied, our Eyes must be fix'd upon Heaven, and God's Justice, and Vengeance survey'd with an impartial Eye, till it makes us wish with *Jeremy, O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a fountain of Tears, that I might weep day and night for the Iniquities of my Sins, Jer. 9 1.*

8. *Alms and Works of Charity must accompany such Fasts*; for thus we are taught, *Isa. 58. 6, 7. Is not this the Fast that I have chosen? To undo the heavy Burdens,*

dens, to deal thy Bread to the Hungry, and that thou bring the Poor that are cast out to thy House? In such Fasts we come to beg a considerable Alms of God, and God is resolved to observe his own Rule. *With what measure you mete, with the same it shall be measured to you again,* and that the merciful shall obtain Mercy. What Pity can we expect from God at such times, while we shut up our Bowels of Compassion to the Needy? Though we ourselves fast, yet that's no Rule for them that are in distress and want daily Food, and we then fast with some Comfort while we make them eat that are destitute of necessities and conveniencies. And I cannot but mention here, what *Livy* tells us, was practised by the ancient *Romans* upon such Occasions. *They were Heathens of whom he speaks*; Private Houses stood open that Day to all Comers, Victuals and all sorts of Food with the free use of it, were offer'd to those who wanted it, and the Citizens were hospitable to Strangers, as well as to their Acquaintance, even to their Enemies, no Man quarrell'd or went to Law. That Day Prisoners were released, and it was a Crime to bind any Man for his Misdemeanor.

9. *In such Fasts we must have no ill Designs.* He that with *Jezebel* fasts to circumvent an innocent *Naboth*, fasts not to God, but to the Devil, and he who hath some Interest

terest or Intrigue to carry on, and can effect it by nothing so easily as by a Fast and Humiliation, to bring People into a good Opinion of him, takes strange Pains to make God his implacable Enemy. To provoke God by downright Works of Darknes, is all one would think that Wickedness can reach to; but to convert Religion into Sin, and by a Fast to hold a Candle to the Devil, is a Villany which hath no Name, and therefore the Punishment due to it can have no bounds, no measure. He that Fasts upon the account of the great Injustice and Oppression he hath been guilty of, in hopes that God will let him enjoy the Estate or Means he hath wrongfully gotten without Restitution, observes a lesser Command and breaks a greater. The Design in such Fasts must be no other than to cloth our Souls with greater Righteousness, and to get our Hearts fill'd with greater Zeal to God's Glory. To think that a Fast will excuse my Sin, or Abstinence serve for a Cloak to cover my unlawful Desires, or make my Lusts and wilful Follies pass for Peccadillos in Heaven, are Thoughts which require no other Confutation but God's Thunder; and where People can think so ill of God and Religion, there is no other way to convince them but by *Vials of Wrath, and Cups of trembling and astonishment.*

The Best Exercise.

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Vid.

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c. 2. sect. 2

10. *In these Fasts new Resolutions must be made against those Sins we find ourselves very prone and inclined to ; without this our Fasts are but cold Services, and our Abstinence but a formality. It is therefore well observed by the Jewish Doctors, that it is not said of the Ninevites, that God saw their Fasting and their Sackloth, but their Works, and that they turned from their evil ways ; without such Resolutions, we only fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the Fist of Wickedness, as it is said, Isa. 58.* 4. but do not fast to God. If we have been defective in any Duty, new Resolutions must be made against the Neglect, new Resolutions to be more careful in the Performance, new Resolutions to watch more, and to overcome ourselves. This is to renew our Covenant with God, and when we do so, God will be found of us, 2 Chron. 15. 12. 15. To weaken our Bodies in fasting while our Sins continue vigorous and strong, is only a seeming imitation of a Nation that doth Righteousness, and forsakes not the Ordinances of God, but no real following after Righteousness, as God complains of the Jews Isa. 58. 2.

11. *Our Intent in such Fasts must be to fit ourselves for the Influences of God's Spirit. One great reason why the Christians of old had so plentiful a Portion of God's Spirit vouchsafed to them, was, without doubt,*

their great Temperance and Abstinence, which makes the Soul more agile and lively, and consequently quickens her Understanding, and prepares her for those Communications of the Deity. I can lay no very great stress upon the place, because it concerns a particular Person, yet it is remarkable however, that the Evangelist speaking of St. *John the Baptist's* Abstinence, immediately subjoins the Privilege we speak of, *Luke 1. 15. He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither Wine nor strong Drink, and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost*, as if Abstinence attracted that invisible Influence, and God loved to converse more with Persons that are Enemies to pampering of their Bodies, than with those that delight in corporal Food and choicer Diet. Indeed the more the Body is cherished, the more sleepy will the Soul be, and the less it is cocker'd and pleased, the more active will the Spirit be; and I think I may lay it down for a Maxim, That the greatest Revelations and Inspirations have been vouchsafed to Men that have been most given to Abstinence. Of *Anna* the Prophetess it was particularly said, that she *served God with fasting much*, *Luke, 2. 37.* Not that I would encourage Men to aim at extraordinary Visions and Revelations in their Fasts, but so much I dare promise them, that by frequent Religious Fasts, they may obtain great Assistance

stances of God's Spirit to subdue their Corruptions, and to do great things for God, and to arrive to more than ordinary Content and Satisfaction. And this calls me to another Observation.

12. *That these Fasts, if the Soul receive any great good by them, as I hinted before, must be frequent.* Once a Year, or once in half a Year, to deny ourselves in Meat and Drink upon the Account of Devotion, is may be to do more than profane Persons, but not to do more than Hypocrites; it is the frequency of Study makes Men Scholars, and the frequency of Speaking makes Men Masters of a Language. Frequent touching of the Strings makes a Man a good Lutenist, as frequent working at a Trade, makes a Man an excellent Artificer, so he that repeats that Exercise often, will not only get a facility in the Performance, but his Soul will signally thrive by it, supposing still that the Day be spent as I have directed; and though we cannot lay down a certain Rule for all Men, because their Constitutions and Employments are different; yet I should think that once a Month at least any private Christian might keep a solemn Fast to obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in the time of need. Those who have more time, may take the first Christians for their Pattern, and Exercise themselves either once or twice a Week in such Abstinence. The Scripture hath not gi-

ven us any particular Instructions about it, because God would have such Exercises come freely from us without Constraint, and then they become *Golden Vials full of Odours*, as St. *John* speaks, *Rev.* 5. 8.

13. *When we fast thus, our Care must be not to despise others that do not.* Every Man stands and falls to his own Master, and I that know not another's Reasons, why he neglects such Exercises, must not therefore judge him as profane. I must still consider that I have more need of such Self-denials than other Men, and though they do not for the present apply themselves to the stricter Rules of Living, God will in time acquaint them with their Duty. I know my own Wants and Necessities best, and my first care must be to save my own Soul. As other Men's Neglects must be no Examples to me, so neither if they do not do what I do, must I cry *Stand off, for I am holier than thou art.* This may besit a *Pharisee*, but doth not become a Christian, and whatever effects Grace produces in the Soul, to be sure contempt of others is no Fruit of that Tree.

14. *Those that are under the Yoke, as Servants, or Apprentices, and are desirous of this Exercise, must take such Days as their Masters and Superiours will allow, or when they can be best spared from their Work and Employment, and if it be reply'd, that they have not other Days but Sundays*
and

and Holidays, I answer, that there's no place of Scripture that forbids turning the Lord's Day or other Festivals in case of Necessity, into Days of Humiliation, especially where the severity of Masters and Mistresses is such, they will neither enter into God's Kingdom themselves, nor suffer those that will to enter. The Eastern Church heretofore made it a Crime to fast on *Saturday*, or on the *Sabbath Day*, except the great *Saturday* before *Easter*, yet the *Western Church* ventured it; and what was a Festival in the *East*, was a Humiliation Day in the *West*, and no doubt they had their different Reasons for it. As the *Eastern Church* made it a Festival to oppose the Heresy of *Marcion*, who fasted that Day; so the *Western* made it a Day of Humiliation, because the Disciples of our Lord were overwhelm'd with Grief and Sorrow that Day for the loss of their Master.

This Passage I mention on purpose to shew, That though the Lord's-Day and other Holidays be Festivals, yet it hath not been unusual to change Festivals into Fasting-days; and consequently a Person that is under such Bondage, may no doubt lawfully spend them in such mortifying Exercises, because he hath no other Days to employ in such Devotions.

15. *They that are Masters of their time, and have liberty to chuse what days they think fit for this Exercise, may do well to pitch on such days, when together with their*

Vid Ca-
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stol 55.

ΕΙΠΙ: ΚΥ-
ΕΙΣΑΚΗΝ Η
ΟΑΒΒΑΓΟΥ
ΥΠΕΥΕΙ,
ΠΑΛΗΝ ΕΝΘ
ΟΑΒΒΑΠΟΥ
ΤΑ ΟΑΒΒΑ,
ΕΥΤΘ

ΧΕΙΣΟΝΙ-
ΥΘ ΙΣΙΥ.

Auth. E-
pist. Ad
Philip.
Ignatio
adif. ripta.

private Devotions, they may have opportunities to hear a Sermon, or to be present at the publick Prayers of the Church. For these publick Devotions keep the private warm; and as one Hand washeth the other, so the private fits the Soul for the publick, and the publick makes her return with greater Appetite to her private Confessions and Orisons. On such Days, when our private Devotions are on the wing, and our Hearts hot within us, we are fitter to joyn with our Fellow Christians in publick, and may contribute to the hearing of their Prayers, for since the exaudition of Prayer depends much upon the fervour of it, Abstinence as I said before being a great means to give heat and fire to our Prayers, we may on such Days by our Addresses to God in publick as well as private, signally promote not only our own, but also our Neighbour's welfare and happiness.

16. *When at Night we break our Fast, it is fit and convenient we should be very moderate in eating and drinking, lest with the Severities of the day we forget our Resolutions of better Obedience too.* He that hath fasted all Day, and gluts himself again at Night, seems to be glad that the Devotion is over, and to take greater delight in his Corporal, than Spiritual Food and Nourishment. The serious frame of Spirit we have been in all Day, must be preserv'd at Night; and sure I

am, that feeding ourselves to the full at such times, will very much debilitate and weaken the noble fence we had all Day; and therefore a courser Diet than ordinary is fittest at Night, when we have been with God all Day. It keeps in the holy Fire, and helps to maintain the serious Thoughts we have had; for the courser the Meat, or Food is, the less palatable will it be; and the less palatable, the less delight a Man will take in it; and the less delight he takes in it, the more he'll reflect on the Truths that have been in his Mind all Day.

To this purpose, I remember a Passage in *Procopius* concerning *Justinian the Emperor*, The Week before *Easter*, saith he, he fasted every Day, and led a very severe Life, such as meaner Men would scarce have endur'd. All the Day long he abstain'd from Meat and Drink, and being hungry at Night, would not suffer his Servants to set either Bread or Wine, or any curious Dishes up n his Table, but caus'd some Coleworts, and common Herbs of the Field, macerated for some Days in Vinegar, to be brought up to him; and of these he did eat, and his Drink was Water; nor did he eat of this Food to satiety, but having tasted a little would give over again, scarce taking so much as would suffice Nature.

3. And having laid down these Rules, my Reader will suppose, that I would not have mention'd

mention'd them, but with an intent to exhort him to the frequent use of this holy Abstinence, the third Particular I promised to offer to your Consideration.

The *Grecians*, at this Day, scarce take us, who call ourselves Protestants, for Christians, because we fast so little, thinking it impossible to be Followers of the Primitive Church, and not to imitate them in this Exercise. The truth is, it is a thing so little practis'd among us, except it be now and then, when we are put upon't by the Magistrate in some imminent Danger, that he that knows any thing of the ancient Church, may wonder how we come to leave out so considerable a part of Devotion. Our Church is not wanting in calling upon her Members to observe Days of Religious Abstinence, but the generality think themselves unconcern'd at her Orders; and Fasting hath got so ill a Reputation among us, because the *Roman* Church hath miserably perverted the use of it, that the generality are afraid to venture upon it, for fear they should be guilty with *Lot's Wife*, of looking back towards *Sodom*, from which they are escap'd. But most certainly this Exercise is a Christian Exercise, in despite of all those Abuses, and was practis'd in the ancient Church, as surely as the present Church of *Rome* is departed from that ancient way of Holiness. Go through the whole Nation, you will not see
one

ex- the Family in twenty set themselves to seek
holy the Lord by a solemn Fast, through the
nised whole Year; and I dare say, there are
e us, thousands that never heard, or consider'd,
risti- that it was their Duty. Gluttony and Lux-
im- ury, and Eating and Drinking heartily, are
rive made such necessary attendants of Men's
Ex- Lives, that they think should they Fast one
ttle whole Day, and spend the whole Day in
and Confessions and Prayers, they should cer-
gi- tainly dye at Night. It is a sign they have a
he high esteem for Religion all this while;
ch, sure they do not think their Souls worth
so any thing that do not, or will not refresh
ch them now and then by such Abstinence;
ers for the Soul never feeds better than when
ut the Body fasts.

Hear this, ye drowsy, lazy, careless *Chri-*
stians; what do you call yourselves *Chri-*
stians for, if you will not do as the ancient
Christians did? What made the first Plan-
ters of the Christian Religion fast so often,
if they had not apprehended it exceeding
necessary? Were they Fools for so doing,
or if they had not judged it highly expedi-
ent, would they have been so weak, as to
have made it their most frequent Exercise?
Can you think God's Spirit will ever visit
you, while you mind nothing so much as
your Belly? Is fullness of Bread, the way
to be fill'd with the Holy Ghost? Do you
ever hope to overcome the Lusts of the
Flesh

Flesh without this Exercise? Do you think your evil Desires will ever dye, except you chastise them by Fasting into better Manners? Do you think the World and its Glories will ever become contemptible in your Eyes, if by such Abstinence now and then you do not learn to despise it? Do you think you will ever become eminent Saint while you are all for eating and drinking? Hath God deny'd himself so far, as to deliver up his Son for you, and cannot you deny yourselves in a little Meat and Drink for his sake, that you may take his Death and Passion into Consideration? Do you think God is so fond of you, that he'll make you partakers of the Divine Nature, while you know not what denying the Body means? Do you think you will ever get any great Portion of Grace, while you think much of attending the Lord, in such Mortifications? Do you think your Minds will ever pierce into the Mysteries of God's love without such Humiliations? Do you think you will ever be admitted to those high Degrees of God's Favour, that the Saints of old arriv'd to without such abasement? Do you think your Eyes will ever be as clear as theirs, while your Fasts are not as strict as theirs? Do you think you will ever feel that Joy they felt, without such Preparatives.

To add some other Motives, and encouraging Arguments.

I. By

1. By eating we were lost, and by fasting we must recover. Had *Eve* fasted, and abstained from the forbidden Tree, Fasting would have been needless and superfluous now; and if Fasting was necessary in *Paradise*, shall it not be more needful now? Of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, said God, Gen. 2. 17. If the Medicine was wholesome before we were sick, how much more wholesome must it be, now we are so? Was it expedient before our Lusts were in Rebellion against our Reason? And shall it not be more expedient now that they war against the Soul? Had *Adam* hearkened to this Voice of God, he had never heard that more dreadful Word, *Earth thou art, and to Earth shalt thou return*: It was want of Fasting brought Death and Trouble, and Anguish into the World; and if things are cur'd by Contraries, hot things by cold, and cold by hot, that first Luxury had need be expiated, and cured by Abstinence.

2. Fasting thus, we imitate the Holy Angels, they eat not, they drink not, and yet they praise God Day and Night; they have indeed Bread to eat, but that Bread is no other than the Light of God's Countenance, which continually feeds and nourishes them into the highest Happiness. When I say, we imitate them, I press no such imitation, as that *Monk* pretended to, that would needs live like the Angels of God, and went into a barren

barren Wilderness, taking no Provision with him, believing that God would feed him without a *Metaphor*, with Angel's Food; but finding that after a few Days, that for want of convenient Food, he was ready to faint and dye away, he return'd to his Friends again; and one of them hearing him knock and calling, *Open the Door, for I am such an one.* It's impossible, said his Friend, for such an one is become an Angel; If thou art an Angel, what dost thou stand knocking here for? But he continu'd knocking, confess'd his weakness, and begg'd of him to let him in and give somewhat to support Nature, that he might recover Strength. I mean no such imitation; but as Fasting makes our Souls fly up more vigorously to Heaven, and fits us for Divine Contemplations, and Heavenly Meditations, so far we may be said in this Exercise, to imitate those blessed Spirits, whose Contemplations of the Divine Goodness are always sprightly, and ravishing.

3. Frequent Fasting is that which will preserve Health and Life better than any Physick whatsoever. What makes so much Work for Physicians but eating and drinking to intemperance? Nay, do not Physicians cure Men by Abstinence? And if that be their great Remedy, why should we not make use of it before we have need of them? Gouts and Fevers are best cur'd by Fasting, and forbearing nourishing Victuals: If it lie
in

in our power to prevent Diseases, who can pity us, when we fall into them, seeing we are willful in the procuring? So advantageous, so profitable is God's Service, it heals not only the inward, but the outward Man too, conserves Nature in its vigor, the Eyes in their strength, the Limbs in their nimbleness, and the Head in an even temper. What made the ancient *Hermits*, that kept almost a perpetual Fast, live so long? Why! their frequent fasting: So true is that saying of *Solomon*, *The Fear of the Lord*, to which Fasting is subservient, *prolongeth Days*, Prov. 10. 27.

4. If you would displease the Devil, fast; if you would please him, neglect this Exercise. Nothing pleases the Prince of Darkness more than feeding high; by this he tempted the *Israelites* to Idolatry, *Numb.* 25. 1. By this he tempts Men to Pride, to Fornication, to Adultery, to Lustfulness, to Wrath, to Malice, to Revenge. By Fasting the Devil is expell'd, by Fasting his Power is weaken'd, by Fasting his Temptations lose their sting. By continual Feeding our selves he darkens our Understanding, clouds our Reason, dulls our Devotion, makes us indispos'd for God's Service, and deprives us of that Light, whereby our Feet should be guided into the Ways of Peace. *How long then do you halt between two Opinions; if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal be God, follow him,* 1 Kings 18. 21.

5. Will

(a) Vid.
Diog.
Laert. lib.
10. de E-
picuro &
lib. 8. de
Pythag.
ἐν τῷ δὲ
γὰρ σὺ-
ματὶ
ἐστὶν, ὅ-
τι οὐκ
ἐστὶν ἡ
μετρί-
α.
(b) Hie-
rom tom. 2.
lib. 2. con-
tra Jovin.

5. Will not the very Heathens shame you in the last Day, if you neglect this Exercise?
(a) *Epicurus* himself liv'd upon Bread and Water, and Apples, and Herbs, saying, that Bread and Water would satisfy Nature, and what was beyond that, was not to satisfy Nature, but Luxury. The like did *Pythagoras* before him, who defended, that this slight and slender Diet would not only preserve Men's Health, but furnish them with excellent Notions, and clarify their Reason.
(b) *St. Jerom* from Heathen Writers, tells us, how under *Saturn* the first Men liv'd altogether upon Fruits, and Apples; how under *Cyrus* many of the *Persians* liv'd altogether upon Salt, and Bread, and Water, and Barley-Flower; how the ancient Priests of *Egypt* abstain'd from all Flesh and Wine, did eat Bread but seldom, made Herbs and Fruits of the Earth their only Diet, and would not touch either Milk or Eggs, saying, that the one was but liquid Flesh, and the other nothing but Blood, only the colour chang'd; and how the *Persian Magi* made use in their Diet of nothing but Flower, and Herbs; I do not from hence infer, that you must change your Diet, but only this, what a Witness this Temperance of the *Pagans* will be against you one Day, even against your Intemperance, and feeding high, and unwillingness to apply yourselves sometimes to this Religious Exercise of Fasting and Abstinence.

6. So

6. So strange a Power hath this Exercise with God, that by Vertue of it many have wrought Miracles. I know not whether that old Observation will hold water, that *Elijah*, while he kept to Bread and Water, wrought Miracles; but after he began to eat Flesh, that Power ceas'd. However, herein the Fathers agree, That by Fasting *Daniel* stop'd the Mouths of Lyons; by Fasting the three young Men at the Court of *Babylon* quench'd the violence of the Fire, which makes *St. Hierom* cry out, How lovely is this Exercise, which appeases God, asswages the rage of Lyons, and chases Devils? By Fasting the *Israelites* overcame the *Amalakites*; by Fasting *Joshua* stay'd the Course of the Sun; by Fasting *Lazarus* comes to be receiv'd into *Abraham's* Bosom. I conclude this Subject with the Words of *St. Ambrose*, Great is the Vertue of Abstinence, an Exercise so glorious, that the Son of God himself was enamour'd with it. The fasting *Elijah* speaks the Word, and the Heavens become Brass; by Fasting he raises the Widow's Son to Life again, commands Rain, calls for Fire from Above, and is wrapt up in a fiery Chariot into Paradise; by his Forty Days Fast he obtains the Honour of the Divine Presence, and the more he fasts, the greater Marks of God's Favour he receives, stops the Stream of Jordan, and turns its slimy bottom into Dust. For what is Abstinence but a Picture of Heaven; its the

Author of
Sermon ad
fratr. in
Eremoper-
peram ad-
for. Augu-
stin.

Ambros.
lib. de Elia
jejun.
c. 1, 2.

Life of Angels, the Death of Sin, the Grace of evil Concupiscence, the Means of Salvation, the Root of Grace, and the Foundation of Chastity. By this Men climb up to Heaven a nearer way; And by the strength of this Elias ascended, before the Horses of Fire mounted him on high.

The Prayer.

O Holy and most merciful Saviour, who hath given us the best Religion, the wholesomest Rules of Living, the most equitable Precepts that were given to the Children of Men; while I admire thy Mercy, cannot but bewail mine own Misery. While I wonder at thy Goodness and Tenderness to my Soul, I cannot but deplore my backwardness to the stricter Duties of Christianity. How loth am I to curb this Body! How loth to bring my Flesh in subjection! How apt am I to flatter myself, that Heaven will come cheaper, than at the price of Mortification. O when will these vain Imaginations leave me! When shall I get the temper of thy dearest Servants? How slavishly do I serve thee. How apt am I to make Bargains with thee and to limit my Obedience! I want thee free, that Princely Spirit, that fervent Love which may think nothing too good for Heaven. Lord, shew me the vanity of my over-tenderness to this dying Body. I am sensible that when I feed it high, it teaches my Soul

to rebel against thee ! O let me not be afraid
of the Arguments it gives me to spare myself.
These are but Pretences, the Design is to
preserve its own ease and quiet in Sin and
Vanity. Let me see through all these Cob-
webs, and persuade me to keep under my
Body, lest I become a Cast-away : Let my
Fasts have those good effects upon me, which
they have had upon thy Saints of old. Let
my Lusts dye, my Corruptions decay, my Va-
nities become odious to me. Let Holiness be-
come sweet, the Light of thy Countenance
pleasant, and the Influences of thy Grace
ravishing to my Soul. Let my Abstinence
from Food work in me Abstinence from Evil.
Let it prove a Means to make my Prayers
 fervent, my Devotions quick, my Mind clear,
my Affections lively, that I may at last enjoy
the Festivals of Angels, and eat and drink
with my Blessed Master at his Table, in his
Kingdom ; then shall I fast from Sin for
ever ; then shall I fast from all Temptations.
Then shall I hunger no more after the Meat
that perisheth : Then shall I thirst no more
after the muddy Streams of sensual Satis-
faction. Then my Hunger shall be refin'd in-
to Fruition, my Thirst exalted into Enjoy-
ments, such as Abana, and Pharpar cannot
give, and the Rivers of Damascus, and of
Jordan too, fall short of ; then I shall need no
Provision for this Body. Then my Flesh will
long no more after Forbidden-fruit ; then I

shall feed on thy Love for ever; that will be my Meat and Drink; that will be better to me than all the Trees of a Terrestrial Paradise; that will nourish me more than Milk and Honey; that will give me a more cheerful Countenance than the Blood of the Grape then I shall need to take care no more about what I shall eat, or what I shall drink, or wherewithal I shall be cloathed. Righteousness shall be my Garment then, and Holiness everlasting Holiness my Robe of Glory, Amen.

III. *Extraordinary Exercise.*

Watching. An Exercise hinted and recommended, *Matth. 26. 38, 40, 41. Mark 13. 37. 1 Pet. 5. 8. Acts 16. 25, and 20. 7.* By Watching here, I do not mean the watchfulness of the Mind, a Subject, I have already sufficiently Discours'd of in the ordinary and constant Exercises, but Abstinence from Sleep, and keeping ourselves awake for Devotion sake; in a Word, that which the Primitive Church hath express'd by *Vigils*, either sitting up the greatest part of the Night or rising at Midnight to praise God, and to magnify his Goodness. And though I do believe, that in the places I have quoted for this piece of Self-denial, Christ intends chiefly mental Watching; yet some of the Expressions are such, that they cannot but import corporal

poral Watching too; and since People cannot be suppos'd to be exhorted to *Vigils* in the Day-time, when the greatest part of Mankind are awake, it must follow, that this Watching imports Self-denial in Sleep at Night. And the reason of the necessity of this Exercise, is given by St. Chrysostom. *The Night was not made that we should spend and consume it all in Sleep, witness your Seamen, Tradesmen and Artificers. So the Church of God rises at Mid-night; Imitate her, and behold the dance and order of the Stars; How profound is the silence of Nature, how quiet are all things! Stand amaz'd at God's Dispensation. Now is the Soul nimbler, subtler, quicker, fitter to behold things sublime and great. The Darkness may lead thee into the Contemplation of thy Sin, and consequently into Compunction; seeing the Sky embroider'd with Light, what an excellent Consideration will this produce of thy Creator's Wisdom! Midnight Prayers strangely incline God's Favour, especially if thou make that time a time of Lamentation, which others make a time of Rest and Laziness.*

Night Devotions in all probability have been very early in the World, and God seems to have given Men an *Item* of them by his appearing to them so often in the Night. Before Day *Abraham* rose to sacrifice his Son. In the Night it was that *Jacob*

Gen 22.3.
Gen. 28.
11, 12.

Gen. 32. wrestled with God, and received the Blessing. In the Night it was that God led the Children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*. *Samuel* cry'd unto the Lord all Night. *Judith* rose up in the Night, and performed her Devotions; and who knows not what the mighty *David* saith of himself, that he washed his Couch with his Tears at Night. In the Night the Son of God was born, and the Angel of the Lord brought the News of it to the Shepherds.

The Heathen themselves, by a natural dictate of Reason thought it unjust to spend all their Night in sleep without some Expressions of Gratitude to their Deities. This made them not only sacrifice a Cock to the Night, which they adored as a Goddess, but by watching and sitting up at Night, and praying to their Gods, testify'd their Respect and Homage to that Being, from which they thought their Blessings did drop down. It's true, many of their Nocturnal Devotions, were impious, prophane and ridiculous, but still this argues, that they thought this rational, and a Duty to the Gods they worship'd, to adore them in the Night as well as in the Day; not only the Vestals rose in the middle of the Night to sacrifice, but the *Indian* Philosophers too paid their Respect

Cic. de legib. 2. Seneca de provid. c. 5. to the Sun at Night; for it was their God, and the same they did in other places to *Venus, Bacchus, Apello, Minerva*, which makes

Cicero

Cicero and *Seneca* speak highly in commendation of such Vigils or devotional Watchings, if they be used with Sobriety. How the Christians came to exercise themselves this way is soon guessed at, if we reflect on what Christ had told them, that he would come to Judgment in the Night; or to use his own Words, *as a Thief in the Night*. They trembled at the Word he had spoke, *Mark* ^{Mat. 2. 5.} ^{43.} ^{Rev. 3. 3.} 13. 35. *Watch therefore, for ye know not what time the Master of the House cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at the Cock-crowing, or in the Morning; and this made them deny themselves in their sleep so often, and rise to praise God, least coming in the Night, he should find them unprepared.*

The Example of *David* was a great motive also, for *at midnight will I rise and give Thanks unto thee;* saith he, *Psal. 119. 62.* For the Christians in those ages had a Custom, which is much out of Fashion now, whatever they found that an holy Man had done before them, if it were possible, they would imitate him in that Service and Devotion. This made *Paul* and *Silas* pray and sing ^{Acts 16.} Praises at Midnight, and from hence, as well ^{25.} as from Christ's Watch-word it was, that the Christians in *Pliny's* time used to meet before Day, and sing a Psalm to Christ, ^{Plin. Sec. lib. 10. E. pist. 79. Tertull. ad Uxor. l. 2. c. 4.} as unto their God. And these Meetings *Tertullian* calls *Nocturnal Convocations*, as the Prayers then used were afterward call'd

*Preces Lu-
cernaria.*

Lamp-Devotions, or Candle-Devotions. And though I do not deny but that the Persecutions of those Ages were partly the Cause of their meetings at Night, when their Adversaries the Heathen were asleep, and therefore unlikely to disturb them in their Worship, yet this could not be the sole Reason; for sometimes they had respite, and lucid Intervals, even under Heathen Emperors, and yet they continued their Vigils, and Night-Services.

*Epiph. in
Compend.
Hieron. Ep.
ad Eustach.
Ep. Demetr.*

These Night Devotions were in process of time performed in this Order. 1. When Day-light was shut in. 2. When they were going to Bed. 3. At Midnight. 4. By break of Day, hence it is, that St. *Jerom* bids *Eustochium* rise twice or thrice, out of her bed at Night to Prayer, and these four Hours of Prayer at Night, joyned with the three Hours in the Day, made up that ordinary Devotion which they undertook in imitation of Holy *David*; *Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy Righteous Judgments*, Psal. 119. 164. for they pray'd at Nine of the Clock in the Morning, because then the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles, at Twelve of the Clock at Noon, because then the Son of God was crucify'd, and at Three in the Afternoon, because then Christ gave up the Ghost.

*Vid. Chry-
sost. ad.
Psal. 118.*

The Heathen, especially in the first and second Centuries after Christ, took so much Notice of these Midnight Devotions of the Christians, that they ordinarily call'd them

Owls,

Owls, and Men that shun'd Day-light, and though it's true, they accused them of promiscuous Copulations, eating of Children and such Crimes, partly because they could not tell what they did in those Night-Assemblies, and therefore suspected it must be some ill thing they did, because they made use of the Night; partly because the villainous *Gnosticks*, who call'd themselves Christians, committed Abominations much like these; yet the World found afterwards, that it was their Love to their Creator and Redeemer, that made them watch and pray, and praise, and sing the Goodness of their God at Midnight. It happened afterward that these Night Devotions were abus'd; for Men and Women using to meet at Night in Church-yards to praise God, some were so prophane as to commit Wickedness together, and made those Devotions Opportunities of impure and lascivious Actions; upon which Account they were forbid, especially to the Women, by the *Eliberitane Council*, about the Year 305 after Christ; yet this restrained not the sober use of this Exercise, either in private Houses, or in publick Places, where Men met by themselves; whence it came to pass that in succeeding Ages, they went so far, as to institute Societies of Men, which they called *gno unsot*, or Men that never slept, who relieving one another, sung Praises to God Day and Night without any Intermiſſion and Interruption;

Vid. Con-
cil Eliber.
can. 35.
Placuit.
prohiberi,
neſamina
in cœmi-
teriis per-
vigilent eo
quod ſapè
ſub obtentu
orationis
latentur
ſcelera com-
mittant.

terrurption ; for as ſoon as one Company had done, another began, and thus they repreſented Heaven, and the Joys of Angels here on Earth. This Zeal in theſe latter Ages is grown cold, and the lukewarmneſs of the preſent times is ſuch, that he ſeems to be a ſetter forth of new gods, that preaches up this kind of Exercise ; yet I know not who we can imitate better than the Chriſtians, who lived in times of the pureſt Devotion, and to ſee how far this Exercise may be revived among us, is the attempt of the following Diſcourſe ; and to make it practicable, I ſhall firſt lay down ſome Rules concerning it, and then add ſome Encouragements.

The Rules are theſe following.

1. There being at this Day no publick Meetings of Chriſtians at Night upon the account of Devotion ; what is done, muſt be done by private Perſons in their own Chambers or Houſes. Where there are no publick Societies to encourage us, there our own Zeal muſt prompt us to ſuch Exercifes ; and did private Men and Families begin it once, the Governors of the Church would ſoon encourage it publickly, who only forbear to urge it, becauſe the Age will not bear ſuch watchfulneſs. A Chriſtian that's Zealous for God's Glory, ſtays not for a publick Summons, if he finds that ſuch an act of Piety, is acceptable to God, and it's enough to him that the

Saints

Saints of old did use it. Their Practice kindles fervour in his Breast at home, and as Man for to pray need not every time he is to kneel down run to a publick Church to pray, so neither is a Christian obliged to neglect this Watching upon the account of Devotion, because it is not exercised in publick. It is enough that the Church doth recommend it to private Christians, though she cannot as yet bring private Christians to use this Self-denial publickly. It were to be wish'd that the Ministers of the Gospel did begin this Exercise, and possibly some well-disposed Christians would follow them, but the Age we live in is so very apt to call all things Superstition, and Rags of the Whore of *Babylon*, that looks like Self-denial, that even those Divines that would observe these Vigils publickly dare not, for fear of greater Inconveniencies.

2. As I told you in the beginning, that these Vigils or Watchings to Devotion at Night, had reference either to sitting up the greatest part of the Night, or to rising at Midnight, and employing some time in Prayers and Praises, so where a Man means to make use of the longer Vigils, he would not do amiss if he used them once a Week; tho' if a Man can bring himself to it, the Vigils appointed by our Church, are an excellent Rule to go by. To sit up one Night in even certainly cannot be prejudicial to Health, when

*Tertul. lib.
de jejun.*

when we see Persons upon more trivial Occasions, without doing themselves any hurt, set up two or three Nights in a Week. The Christians of old, by what *Tertullian* tells us, sat up two Nights in a Week upon the account of Religion: How happy should we think ourselves to be if we could perswade Men to sit up but one. The shorter Vigils or rising at Midnight to Devotion, and spending some time in pious Acts and Exercises, may be easily performed and practised every Night, especially by Men and Women who are single and have nothing to take care of but the things of God; and there can be no great difficulty in it, if we will but force ourselves, and push Nature forward where it is loath to go. This would make us awake as duly about that time, as we do at seven or eight of the Clock in the Morning. Nature is a very tractable thing, especially where People are healthy, and will yield to modest Violence and the Scepter of Reason, and Use will make that facile and easy, which Men look upon under the wrong Notion of Impossibilities.

3. The Exercises proper for these *Vigils*, as I have partly intimated already, are Praying, singing of Psalms, or reciting and repeating such Psalms as are most suitable to our Wants and Necessities, and Meditating. *Theodosius* the Emperor did so, rose in the Night with his Sisters, and their chief Employment was

was to sing Psalms, he one Verse, and they another : So little were Kings and Princes ashamed in those Days to express their Zeal in Religion. These Exercises drive away the tediousness of the Night, and turn darkness into Day. These make the Sun of Righteousness rise upon us with healing under his Wings, and fill the Soul with Oriental Splendor. These make the black Night look lovely, and are the best Weapons to disperse all Terrors the Officers of Hell may scatter at that time among God's Creatures. He that must have variety of Employments at such times to prevent Weariness, may begin with musing upon God's wondrous Works, upon the blackness and deformity of Sin, and the dismalness of that Soul that is a stranger to divine Illumination. From Meditation he may proceed to Prayer, and from Prayer to Singing ; or if he be not able to Sing, to rehearsing the Songs of the Sweet-Singer of *Israel* ; These happy Changes, like so many different Musical Instruments, will give new Delights to his Soul, and make him loath to give over. These like rich Liquors, fill the Heart and all the Faculties thereof with a divine Briskness, and make the Soul rise from her Devotion with a sacred Relish and Appetite.

4. These *Vigils* or watching at Night to Acts of Devotion, may be prejudicial to Persons that labour under weakness of Body,
nay,

may, and to such as work hard in the Day-time, whether the Work be Preaching or Servile Labour; yet do not People work hard every Day, nor do Ministers Preach every Day, nor doth Weakness continue every Day, and therefore these must not be made Impediments for the total neglect of this Exercise: Sometimes People that have work'd all Day cannot sleep, and had they not better consecrate that time to the Praises of that God, *who neither stumblers nor sleeps?* However, on those Days that Men do not spend their Spirits with any extraordinary Service or Toiling, may not the Soul be ravish'd at Night, and summon'd to apply herself to this delightful Severity? Shall the softness of the Bed keep the Soul from such Employment? Or the warm Down of the Pillow hinder a Christian from crying out with the excellent *Psalmist, My Heart is fix'd, my Heart is fix'd, I will sing and give praise. Awake up my glory, awake, I myself will awake right early*, Psal. 57.7.

5. This Exercise at Night may lawfully be neglected, if the evil that may ensue upon it be greater than the good which can be expected from it. This I speak, not only with respect to what Men may find upon the frequent use of this Exercise; for a Man may find upon frequent tryal, that it either indisposes him for nobler Duties, or discomposes him in his Health, whereby he is hinder'd from

from doing God farther Service, and in such Cases it may without Sin be laid aside, but also with respect to the offence his Neighbour may take at it; for it may happen that a weak Christian may sink into great Perplexities, because his strength will not bear this Exercise, while my Examples makes him look upon it as necessary; or a Man may have a Wife that is exceeding tender of him, and upon his exercising himself in this manner, may either lead him a very unquiet life, or make herself sick with vexing and grieving at his Austerities, upon a Fancy that it will shorten his life, or cast him into some dangerous Sickness, and consequently by her continual and importunate quarrelling about it, cause great Disorders in the Family, and by that means put a stop to the free course of some greater Duties; and in both these Cases, it may lawfully be omitted; for God always bids us measure the Exercise of our Duties by the Good that flows from them; and therefore if the evil or mischief accidentally attending such Exercises be greater than the good that we can suppose to reap by them, God certainly requires not the practice or performance of them. Yet even here it is fit we use such Arguments to our Neighbours or Friends, as may discover to them the weakness of their Surmises, and the needlessness of their Scruples, for fear we seem too easy in yielding to the neglect of a thing,
which

which otherwise may be a great promoter of Holiness.

Indeed in the great Moral Duties of the Gospel, which are expressly and peremptorily commanded, I must neither hearken to Father nor Mother, neither Wife nor Sister, nor Children, but as St. *Jerom* speaks, trample upon them all, rather than neglect a known Duty, and undergo all the Inconveniencies and Reproaches of the World, rather than commit a Sin wilfully, but this will not hold in circumstantial things, such as this praising of God at Midnight is; for these must ever give way to the more substantial Duties of Brotherly Kindness and Charity.

6. He that ventures upon these *Vigils* or Exercises, either all Night, or for some time at Midnight, must be a Person that loves God fervently; and in vain do I or any Man alive attempt to bring any one to this piece of Self-denial, except that Person knows what a strong love to God means. No Man can watch that doth not love. As weary as *Jacob* was with his Journey, yet love would not suffer him to sleep at Night, but he must awake to Contemplation; and while he was engaged in it, the Angel of the Covenant wrestled with him, and blessed him. Love shakes off Drowsiness, and Rest itself makes it restless. Love breaks forth the more vigorously at Night, the less there is to hinder it in its Operations. Love makes such Exercises

Gen. 32.
22. 24.

ses easy, and a Christian that hath love to spur him on, runs chearfully in this narrow way. Love carries him beyond Inconveniences, and makes him desirous to lose his Life for him that gave it. Love embraces all Opportunities to exercise its Gratitude to the Lord *Jesus*, and there is no time comes amiss to this inestimable Grace. He that either hath felt or read what Love will do to Friends on Earth, will be able to guess at the Truth of what I do propose, and sure he never knew yet what being sick of love is, I mean of love to Christ, that never found himself in a disposition or temper to say, *By Night on my Bed I sought him whom my Soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not; I will rise now, and go about the City, in the Streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my Soul loveth, I sought him but I found him not. The Watchmen that go about the City found me, to whom I said, saw ye him whom my Soul loveth; it was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my Soul loveth; I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my Mother's House, and into the Chamber of her that conceived me, Cantic. 3. 1, 2, 3.*

7. That this Exercise of rising at Midnight to Prayer may be more Satisfactory and Effectual, I would advise to going to Bed sometimes, that Nature being refresh'd with some sleep before that time, may be the fitter for

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this

this Service ; and it is very probable that those who in the primitive Church used this Watchfulness, observed this Rule. In this Age Tradesmen, and those that have any toiling Employment in the World, have brought themselves to an ill Custom of sitting up at their Trade till Midnight almost, and having tired themselves with running after their worldly Profit all Day, it cannot be otherwise, but they must find themselves very unfit for this nocturnal Exercise. If ever a Man becomes Master of this Vertue, he must learn to accommodate his Business to his Religion, not his Religion to his Business ; and as spiritual Fervour must be the first mover and principal Wheel that must set this a going ; so where Religion is thought worth nothing, all that we have said must be as the News of the destruction of *Sodom* was in the Ears of *Lot's* Kinsmen, a pretty Tale and that's all. If *Euclides* of *Megara* thought not much of it to consult *Socrates* in the Night, why should we think it troublesome to participate of God's Instructions in the Night Season ? We I say, who are to tread in the Steps of the great Bishop and Shepherd of our Souls, and it was his Custom we know, to rise in the Morning a great while before Day, to go into a solitary Place to pray, *Mark* 1. 35.

18. The Task will be more easily and more chearfully performed, if we can get one or two or more of our Acquaintance to join with us in these nocturnal Exercises; Company is a great Encouragement to such acts of Piety, and Man being naturally a sociable Creature, Society not only comforts him, but is a spur to Devotion, especially to such Devotion as is attended with Severity. One keeps the other from fainting under his Burthen; and if one grows cold, the other's Zeal is enough to inspire him with new vigour and alacrity. Those Seven Men *Ruffinus* speaks of, who divided the Night, and allotted four Hours for sleeping, four for praising of God and Prayer, and four for working; and likewise the Day, and appointed six for working, three for reading and praying, three for eating and walking, without all peradventure, found great encouragement in one another's Society; and this their Order would scarce have lasted so many Years as it did, if it had fallen to any single Person's lot to keep it up.

Ruffin. lib. 3. de vit. Monach. sect. 199. 200.

The same Author hath a Passage of another Company, Seven in number, who on *Saturdays* about three of the Clock in the Afternoon us'd to meet, and having eaten together (for in that Age they eat but once a Day, and commonly towards the Evening) they fell into Spiritual Discourses, banishing all Secular Business, and laying aside all

E e 2

thoughts

thoughts of worldly things, and talk'd only of Heaven and future Glory, of the Rest of Saints, and of the Misery of the Damn'd; and when they had spent some time in such Discourses, they sat up all Night, praising and magnifying, and singing the Goodness of God; and this they continu'd (pausing now and then, and spending some time in silence and meditation) till three of the Clock in the Afternoon next day, and so they departed again every one to their several Habitations. And here I cannot forbear adding a Modern Example of these nocturnal Devotions. It is of Mr. *Nicholas Farrer of Gidden Hall*, and his excellent Family.

if. Wal-
ton in the
Life of Mr.
Geo. Her-
bert, p. 69

" He and his Family, which were like a
" little College, and about Thirty in num-
" ber, did most of them keep *Lent*, and all
" *Ember-Weeks* strictly, both in Fasting and
" using all those Prayers that the Church
" hath then appointed to be us'd; and he
" and they did the like on *Fridays*, and on
" the *Vigils* and Eves appointed to be fast-
" ed before the Saints days; and this Fruga-
" lity and Abstinence turn'd to the Relief of
" the Poor; but this was but a part of his
" Charity, none but God and he knew the
" rest.

" This Family, which I have said to be
" in number about Thirty, were a part of
" them his Kindred, and the rest chosen to
" be of a Temper fit to be moulded into a
" devout

“devout Life, and all of them were for their
“Dispositions, serviceable and quiet, and
“humble, and free from Scandal.

“Having thus fitted himself for his Family
“ly he did about the Year 1630. betake himself
“to a constant and methodical Service
“of God, and it was in this manner : He did
“himself use to read the Common-Prayers,
“(for he was a Deacon) every Day at the
“appointed Hours of Ten and Four in the
“Church, which was very near his House,
“and which he had both repair’d and adorned,
“for it was fallen into a great Ruin by
“reason of the depopulation of the Village
“before Mr. *Farrer* bought the Mannor.

“And he did also constantly read the
“*Mattins* every Morning at the Hour of
“Six, either in the Church or in an Oratory
“which was within his own House, and many
“of the Family did there continue with
“him after the Prayers were ended, and
“there they spent some Hours in singing
“Hymns or Anthems, sometimes in the
“Church, and often to an Organ in the Oratory.
“And they sometimes betook themselves
“to meditate, or to pray privately,
“or to read a part of the New Testament,
“or to continue their praying or reading
“the Psalms ; and in case the Psalms were
“not all read in the Day, then Mr. *Farrer*,
“and others of the Congregation, did at
“Night, at the ring of a Watch-Bell, re-

“ pair to the Church or Oratory, and there
 “ betake themselves to Prayers and lauding
 “ God, and reading the Psalms that had not
 “ been read in the Day, and when these or
 “ any part of the Congregation grew weary
 “ or faint, the Watch-Bell was rung, some-
 “ times before, and sometimes after Mid-
 “ night ; and then part of the Family rose
 “ and maintain’d the Watch; sometimes by
 “ praying or singing Lauds to God, or read-
 “ ing the Psalms; and when after some
 “ Hours, they also grew weary or faint, then
 “ they rung the Watch-Bell, and were re-
 “ liev’d by some of the former, or by a new
 “ part of the Society, which continu’d their
 “ Devotions, as hath been mention’d, until
 “ Morning.

“ And it is to be noted, that in this con-
 “ tinu’d serving of God, the Psalter, or whole
 “ Book of Psalms, was in every four and
 “ twenty Hours sung or read over, from the
 “ first to the last Verse, and this done as con-
 “ stantly as the Sun runs her Circle every day
 “ about the World, and then begins it again
 “ the same instant that it ended.

“ Thus did Mr. *Farrer* and his happy Fa-
 “ mily serve God Day and Night; thus did
 “ they always behave themselves as in his
 “ Presence; and they did always eat and
 “ drink by the strictest Rules of Temperance;
 “ eat and drink so as to be ready to rise at

“ Midnight,

“ Midnight, or at the call of a Watch-Bell,
“ and perform their Devotions to God.

“ And it is fit to tell the Reader, that
“ many of the Clergy that were more in-
“ clin’d to practical Piety and Devotion, than
“ to doubtful and needless Disputations, did
“ often come to *Gidden-Hall*, and make
“ themselves a part of that happy Society,
“ and stay a Week or more, and join with
“ Mr. *Farrer* and the Family in these Devo-
“ tions, and assist or ease him or them in
“ their Watch by Night ; and these various
“ Devotions had never less than two of the
“ Domestick Family in the Night ; and the
“ Watch was always kept in the Church or
“ Oratory, unless in extreme cold Winter
“ Nights, and then it was maintain’d in a
“ Parlor which had a Fire in it, and the Par-
“ lor was fitted for that purpose ; and this
“ course of Piety and great Liberality to his
“ poor Neighbours, Mr. *Farrer* maintain’d
“ till his Death, which was in the Year
“ 1639.

So great a Support doth the Soul receive
from good Society, that is of the same mind,
of the same fervour, and of the same zeal
and earnestness to glorify God ; and a Man
will do that, encourag’d by Society, which
before he could not be drawn to perhaps by
the strongest Inforcives or Arguments.

From these Rules, I come in the next
place to recommend to my Readers this No-

cturnal Exercise, and to give them some Encouragement to this piece of Self-denial. The *Arabians* tell this Passage, or Fable of the *Ostrich*, That when she intends to hatch her Eggs, she sits not on them as other Birds, but the Male and Female by turns hatch them, with their Eyes only ; and if one be hungry and minded to seek for Food, it gives notice to the other by a certain cry, to come and relieve it ; and being come, it continues looking upon the Eggs so long till the other be return'd ; and they add, that if either of them should but leave looking on never so little a time, the Eggs would spoil and rot. I do not warrant the truth of the Story, however the *Coptite Christians* are so perswaded of the reality of the thing, that they hang up a lighted Lamp in their Churches between two Ostrich's Eggs, over against the Priest that officiates, to bid him be attentive and watchful about his Devotions.

I know not whether such an Emblem would be any great Engagement to Christians in this Age to watch at Night to the Exercises I have mention'd ; but however the Subject is not so poor and barren, as to be destitute of Arguments, And,

1. Doth this Exercise seem so grievous to you that can rise at any time in the Night, to get some considerable gain ? Would you think it troublesome to rise at Midnight to get Ten or Twenty Pounds ? Were you sure

to

to get every time you rise at Night, half a score Broad-pieces of Gold, would you not make a shift to get up? This shews you can do it, and, but that you think you may save your Souls at a cheaper rate, you would certainly do much for their Profit and Advantage. Sure the Soul may get a considerable Gain by such Vigilance. In the dead of the Night, while other People sleep, to get up and converse with God, is to be truly ambitious of his Favour, and it is his Rule, *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early, shall find me*, Prov. 8. 17. Where God sees a holy Soul thirsting for him in the Night, He certainly satisfies that thirsty Soul with Goodness, and opens for her Rivers in high Places, and Fountains in the midst of Valleys, makes her Wilderness a Pool of Water, and her dry Land Springs of Water, *Isa. 41. 18.* where Men prevent the Dawning of the Morning to Meditate in his Word, God hears their Voice according unto his loving Kindness, and quickens them according to his Word, *Psal. 119. 147, 148, 149.* This is the best Preparation for the Duties of the following Day, and he truly begins the Day with God, that at Midnight rises to give thanks unto the God of his Salvation.

Ut jugulent homines surgunt de nocte latrones. Ut teipsum

2. Behold how Highway-Men and Thieves can rise at Midnight to rob and murder Men! Behold how watchful those unhappy Creatures are to circumvent the unwary Traveller!

servus, non ex pergis? Horat. Epist. lib. 1. Ep. 2.

Are

Are these Wretches so watchful to lose their Souls, and shall not we be as watchful to save ours? Shall they think the Devil's Service worth their watching at Night, and shall not we think the Service of our God worth so much? Do they watch to contrive Mischief, and shall not we do so to contrive our Felicity? The silent Night rouses their Spirits into Action, and shall it dead ours altogether? Shall not we do as much to make sure of Heaven, as they do to make sure of Hell? Or is the undoing of our selves a more charming Act than securing our everlasting Interest? How many are there that can sit up Drinking and Dancing, and Revelling all Night? Can the Devil's Votaries deny themselves for their Master, and shall we do nothing for ours? Is the true God the only Deity that deserves no Self-denial at our Hands? And must the Devil be adored with greater Reverence than He at whose Presence Devils tremble? Men are not weary of playing at Cards, or Dice all Night, and cannot they watch one Hour with Christ at Night? Can Men break their sleep to mind the Works of Darknes, and shall not we break ours for doing things which become the Children of Light?

3. To rise thus at Midnight to praise God is an Act of Charity to our Neighbours; for Thieves, and Purloiners finding us up at a time which they pitch upon for their Robberies,

ries, may be afraid of making Attempts upon a Neighbour's House, for fear of being discovered by us, who are awake, and engaged in Devotion. Not to mention that such Exercises of singing Praises unto God, may strike the Robber if he hear them, into fear and trembling, and oblige him to go away without his intended Prey, as much as the innocent Infant's smiles did the *Turk* that came with an Intent to murder it; so that this Watching at Night is to contribute in part to the publick Good, and to be instrumental in our Neighbour's Preservation.

4. How happy will it be, to be found Praying and Praising God, should God call us away from this World at Midnight. *Blessed is the Servant, whom his Master, when he comes, shall find so doing; Of a Truth, I say unto you, that he will make him Ruler over all that he hath,* Luke 12. 43, 44 One great Reason why the Primitive Christians rose at Midnight to Prayer, as I said before, was because they knew not but Christ might come at that time to Judgment. Did they thus prepare for his coming above sixteen Hundred Years ago, and have not we far greater Reason to watch for his coming, upon whom the ends of the World are come? Did they think the Day of Judgment was near at Hand, and shall we not fear it much more? Did they think to keep their Garments white, and their Lamps burning against the Bridegroom came,

Γρηγοριος
ἀποκρίνεται
Πνεῦμα
κακότητος
Ignat. E-
pist ad Po-
lycarp.

came, and shall not we think so much more? Were they afraid of being asleep at Midnight for fear a Noise should be made, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh*; and have not we far greater Reason to be afraid? Did they so long ago shake off all carnal Security, in expectation of the coming of the Son of God, and shall we rest quietly all Night without thinking once what our Case may be? Sure there is some Strength in these Arguments, if the Ground were but fit for them, if our Hearts were but prepared for them, if the Thorns and Briars of worldly Cares did not choak them; and as tedious as the Exercise may seem to be, certainly means might be found out to make it easy. And,

1. Use would make it so. In the Works of *S. Teresa* there is mention made of one *Peter de Alcantara*, who for forty Years had slept but one Hour and a half in a Day and a Night, and he professed that he found nothing so troublesome to him as breaking himself of his Sleep, which to effect, he always sat when he slept. *Aristotle*, to wake himself in the Night would hold a Brass Ball in his Hand, over a Copper Basin, when he composed himself to rest, which Ball when he was fast asleep, would drop out of his Hand into the Basin, and with the Noise it made, awake him, and give him Notice, that it was time to apply himself to his Studies again; and his Scholar *Alexander the Great* would some-
times

Opp. Teres
in vita. c.
47.

Diog.
Laert. de
Aristotle.

times imitate him in that particular, and nothing but use made it easy to them. Of *Mecænas*, indeed, we read, that for three Years together he slept not at all: And Physicians in their Observations have taken Notice that some have lived without Sleep nine Days, some ten, some fifteen, without any Prejudice to their Health; but these Examples we may justly look upon as Miracles, rather than Effects of Use and Custom; by Use a Man may much abridge himself in his Sleep, but cannot ordinarily attain to a perpetual Vigilancy, and as to be always waking, is to be immortal, so to sleep more than is needful resembles Death more than Life.

And to this Use we shall arrive the sooner, if we eat very moderately; for it's the fumes of a full Stomach that cause immoderate Sleep. Eating little will support Nature better than plentiful Meals; we first corrupt Nature, and teach it to crave more than it wants, and the ill Custom brings a Necessity upon us to keep up our Intemperance. By this moderate Eating *Marcellus Strategus* in *Commodus* his time, brought himself to that Vigilance, that he was the Object of all Men's Admiration. It was St. *Anthony* the Hermit's slender and simple Diet, that enabled him to observe those laborious Vigils we read of; and hence it was that he used to quarrel with the Sun, when he saw him rise, for disturbing the Joy and sweet Communion

munion he had with God all Night, so true was that saying of *Scopelianus* of old, *That the Night is the best Friend of the Soul, and participates of the Wisdom and Glory of the Deity.*

3. Nothing will facilitate this Watchfulness at Night, more than frequent Contemplations of what others do, and have done before us. They were Men and so are we; they carried Flesh and Blood about them, and so do we; they had infirmities of the Flesh as well as we; we have Souls as well as they, and may have Courage as well as they, if we take the same Reasons that they did, into Consideration. A Shadow of this Vertue is to be seen in the *Cock* and *Lyon*; the former of which (a) *Pliny* justly calls a Creature born to call People out of their Beds, and the latter therefore was made by the Ancients the Symbol of Vigilance.

(a) *Plin.*
Hist. Nat.
l. 10. c. 21.

(b) *Valer.*
Flacc. in
Agronaut.

The (b) *Dragon* that kept the *Golden Fleece*, was always awake; and the Hundred ey'd Shepherd then ceased to live, when he ceased to watch; Emblems these are of the Exercise before us; and the Lord *Jesus* therefore continued in Prayer all Night, to

(c) *Chrysol.*
Homil. 24.
de servo.
Vig.

(d) *Philost.*
vit. Apol-
lon. l. 3. c.
14.

shew that if the Master could watch for the Servants, the Servants have reason to watch for their Master, saith the eloquent (c) *Chrysologus*. Of the *Pantarpa* or shining-Stone they report (d) that in the middle of the Night it sends forth a grateful Splendor, and seems

seems to turn Night into Day. Whether there be such a Stone, I dispute not, but the moral of it are these nocturnal Praises and *Hallelujahs*; these make it Day at Midnight, and whatever Darkeness may be on the Face of the Earth, I am sure, in a Soul that uses them, the Sun shines, and a glorious Charming Light arises. The Night they say is a time that Spirits walk abroad; It's true enough, where Men use this Exercise; for an Infinite Spirit, the God of Grace and Peace walks forth to meet them, and the Soul makes her Chamber another *Mabanaim*, a Walk for the Host of God. I conclude this Subject with the Words of *Nestor* ^{Gen. 32.} ^{1, 2.} in *Homer* to *Diomedes*, and the rest.

Ἐγρεο τυθέε' ἡέ· Τὶ πάννουχον ὕπνον ἀοτῆς;
 'Οὐκ αἴτις Τρῶες ἐπὶ θρωσμάῳ πεδίῳ;
 Ἐιάμ' ἀγχινεῶν, ὀλίγῃ, δ' ἔπ' ἡῶρ' ἐρύκη
 'Οτ' οὐ νῦν φίλα τέκνα, φυλάττει, μηδὲ πῖν ὕπνῳ
 Αἰρεῖτο μὴ χάρμα γυνώμεθα δυσμενέεσσι.

Which I Paraphrase thus :

What? Sleep all Night, and th' Enemy so near?
 When from the Camp you may their Voices hear?
 Is it not time unto our Arms to fly,
 When but a Hill 'twixt them and us doth lie?
 Up, stand upon your Guard, my Children, watch,
 Lest the bold Foe you unawares do catch;
 And in your Slaughter triumph, and do scorn
 Your braver Souls, like Men to ruin born.

The

The Prayer.

O God, incomprehensible and glorious, whose Providence watches over me Day and Night, O Shepherd of Israel, who neither slumberest nor sleepest, and whose Eyes are always open for my Good. What hard Thoughts I had of thy Service! How unweildy have I been under thy stricter Precepts! How afraid have I been to hurt my self! What Pains have I taken for the World, and how irksome have thy Precepts been to my Soul! O let it suffice that I have so long followed mine own Will, and for the future, let even thy severest Laws be my Delight and Comfort. Thou hast given me thine only Son to dye for my Sins, and can I after this Mercy, think much of denying my self in mine ease for thy Service? O teach me to use moderation in all things, and even in my sleep to express my Self-denial! I know, O Lord, that without the Assistance of thy Spirit, my Nature is slothful, and my Temper backward to such Mortifications. To thee I come therefore, with humble Desires, with fervent Affections, and with earnest Entreaties, that thou wouldest conquer the Flesh in me, and crush that Rebel by thy Power. Since I can use self-denial in sleep upon a Temporal Account, O let it not be said of me, that upon a Spiritual account I could not Watch. O let my Actions shew, that thou art dearer to me than the World, and

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that I love thee better than Father or Mother, and myself too. When all I have is thine, how shall I not part with something that's dear to me for thy sake! O let me lose my Life while I seek to save it, but be confident that if I lose my Life for thy sake, I shall find it. Thou art the Resurrection and the Life, if I sincerely believe in thee, though I were dead, yet shall I live. O let me live, that I may praise thy Name; and whether I live, or whether I dye, let me live and dye in the Lord Jesus. Give me a sight of the eternal Watchfulness of Angels. They sleep not; they are never oppress'd with Drowsiness; they sing Eternally, and slumber not. That's the Company, the glorious Society I would fain be in. O happy Day! O blessed Time, when I shall watch in thy House for ever! When I shall sing in thy Quire, where nothing is known, nothing is lov'd, nothing is delighted in, but God Blessed for evermore. O my God, as the Eyes of Servants look unto the Hand of their Master; and as the Eyes of a Mistress, so mine Eyes wait upon Thee, O Lord, until thou have mercy upon me, and bring me into the Regions of eternal Brightness, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

IV. Extraordinary Exercise.

Self-Revenge: An Exercise insisted on, 2 Cor. 7. 11. and practis'd by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 9. 27. and by Timothy, 1 Tim. 5. 23. I di-

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stinguish

distinguish this Exercise from the rest, not because Fasting, and Vowing, or Watching have nothing of Self-revenge in them, but because the Word is more general, and includes all other Lawful Severities, which holy Men have us'd upon themselves; so that this Exercise takes in all other Acts of Self-denial, undertaken on purpose that the Soul may learn to dye to the World, and to have her Conversation in Heaven, an Exercise as ancient as Christianity, nay, as ancient as the Law of *Moses*; for it began as early as the

Numb. 6. *Nazarites*, who neither cut their Hair, nor
 2,3,5,6,7. shav'd their Heads, nor drank any Wine, or strong Drink, or tasted of any Liquor of the Grapes, nor eat any dry'd Grapes, nor any thing that was made of the Liquor of the Grapes, or of any strong Drink; Severities us'd on purpose, and by God's Approbation, that they might more entirely dedicate themselves to God's Service: And these Austerities we find afterwards us'd by *Elijah* the Prophet, of whom we read, that he was a

2 Kings 1. Hairy Man, and girt with a Girdle of Leather about his Loins; I know some understand the Expression, a *Hairy Man*, of a Hairy Garment, but this sense seems not to agree with the *Hebrew* Language, which doth not use to express a Man's Garment by such Words; but the Nature or external Shape, and form of his Head or Body, so that he either wore his Hair very long, and
 without

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without dressing, as the *Nazarites*, who were a Religious Order, among the *Jews*, or he seem'd like *Onuphrius*, who met *Paphnutius* in the Wilderness, Hairy all over, ^{*Paphnut. vit. Onu- phr. c. 2.*} insomuch that little else could be seen about him, a piece of Austerity the Prophet made use of, that he might learn to despise the World, and that no Temptations might make any impression upon him, which usually insinuate into our Hearts and Affections, where the Body is us'd delicately, and Men take care to dress up themselves curiously to please the Eyes of Spectators; and though it's true, that *Elijah* was a Fore-runner of *St. John the Baptist*, as *St. John Baptist* was of *Christ*; and *St. John* is said to have had his Raiment of Camel's Hair; which seems to make it probable, that this Hairiness of *Elijah* was only in his Cloaths, because those of his *Anti-type*, or Successor, were so; yet the Prophecy that God would send *Elijah* before the great Day of the Lord *Jesus* his appearing in the World, imported not that he would be exactly like him in his way of Living, and the form of his Body; but that he should come in the Spirit and Power of *Elias* to turn the Hearts of the *Fathers to the Children*, and the *Disobedient to the Wisdom of the Just*, as the Angel said to Zacharias, *Luke* 1. 17.

These Severities were afterwards practised by the *Rechabites*, *Jer.* 35. 6, 7. for they neither drank Wine, neither they nor their

Philo.
Πεὶ ὅ
πάντα
σπουδαῖον
εἶναι ἐλευ-
θερον.

Joseph.
Antiq. lib
18. c. 2.
Epiphan.
Panar. lib
1. c. 16

Sons, neither did they build Houses, nor sow Seed, nor plant Vineyards, nor possess any Land, but dwelt in Tents all their Days, poor and mean, and minding the Salvation of their Souls. When they ceas'd, the *Essenes*, and the *Pharisees* took up that Discipline. The *Essenes* liv'd retir'd from the World, avoided Cities, and Crowds of People, as Temptations to Loosness and Debauchery, hoarded up no Money, purchas'd no Lands, but liv'd altogether upon the Labour of their Hands, and nothing in the World could oblige them to have a hand in making Spears, or Swords, or Arrows, or Breast-plates, or Arms, or any other Instruments of War, because, they said, God had order'd Mankind should live peaceably. They despis'd Riches, Honours, Pleasures, delicate Dishes, and liv'd upon little, contented with a coarse Diet, and aiming at nothing in this World, but Food and Raiment; if Ten of them met none would speak, till he had obtain'd leave of the other Nine; and they ever wore but one Coat, and wore it so long, till it was quite worn out, and then they thought of purchasing another, and all this they did, that they might learn to dye to the World, and live like Men that had Souls to be sav'd. The *Pharisees* went much farther in these Severities, even to Superstition. Besides the First fruits, they paid double Tythes; and besides these Tythes, they gave away the Thirtieth, and

and the Fiftieth parts of their Incomes to the Church, or the Treasury for the Poor; they lay on hard Beds, had sometimes no other Pillows, but *Cylinders*, and many times Pillows fill'd with Straw, and Nails, and sharp Stones, that they might not sleep too long, but awake to Prayers, some would knock their Heads against a Wall, and others hurt their Feet in going along the Streets, because they walk'd with their Eyes shut, being loath to look upon a Woman; and others as Christ saith, would compass Sea^{15.} and Land to make a Profelyte, disfigure^{16.} their Faces, and look very ruefully, inso-much, that they seem'd *Skeletons* rather than Men. Though they had Wives, yet they would tye themselves to Continence and Chastity, some for four, some for nine, some for ten Years, and keep themselves undefil'd from all carnal Pollution.

Whether St. *Paul* learn'd the Severities he us'd upon his Body in the School of the *Pharisees*, at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, we cannot tell, but that he us'd them seems to be very plain, from 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. *I keep under my Body, and bring it into subjection*, where the Greek Word *ὑποταίω*, as a learned Critick of our own observes, is very emphatical, and signifies to strike under the Eye, or to give one a blew Eye, as Wrestlers in the *Ist-mian* Games, that cuffed one another, and wounded one another; and tho' it is uncertain,

Matth. 23.

Matth. 6.

16.

See Dr.

Ham-

mond on

Luk. 18. 5

tain, whether the Apostle proceeded so far in this Mortification, as to wound himself, or beat himself to that degree, that those *Agonists* did, yet it is more than probable, that he did afflict his Body, and fought to keep it under as a Servant, or as a Wrestler, doth his Fellow, that it might not be able to strike again, and undertook such Austerities, as made his Soul more than a Conqueror.

Indeed *Christ* himself liv'd but poor, destitute, and afflicted, and had not where to lay his Head, and whether it was in imitation of *Christ*, that they would be conformable to him in all things, or whether it was out of emulation to the *Jews*, that it should not be said, that the *Essenes* and *Pharisees* did more than they, the Christians about that time, and in the succeeding Ages, seem'd to think themselves oblig'd to put their Bodies to some Afflictions and Severities in this World, for the Glories of another, which made *Nicholas* the Deacon, whom we read of *Act. 6. 5.* instil this Principle into his Disciples,

Euseb.

Hist. Eccl.

l. 3. c. 26.

Clem. Ar.

lex. Strom.

l. 3. sect. 3.

Nicepher.

Eccles. Hist.

l. 3. c. 15.

that they should *παροργίζουσι τὴν σαρκί*, abuse, or mortify the Flesh, use their Bodies coarsly, that they might be more active in Spiritual Concerns, and the same Doctrine, saith *Eusebius*, was taught by the Apostle *Matthias*, and though many have slander'd *Nicholas*, and branded him as an Apostate, and the Author of a *Heresy*, mention'd, *Rev. 2. 15.* and as one, that gave way to promiscuous

Co-

Copulations, and made Scortation a Venial Sin; yet the holy Man hath been wrong'd, as appears by *Eusebius*, and *Clement's Alexandrinus*, and it's very likely that those who call'd themselves *Nicolaitans*, having heard *Nicholas* use that *Motto*, that the Flesh must be abus'd, defended their impure Doctrine with that Saying, and from thence were call'd *Nicolaitans*, whereas *Nicholas* understood no more by it, than that the Flesh must be subdu'd, and bridled by such severities, as we are able to bear, that our Faith and Hope may become more lively, and our inward and outward Man more expedite for Heaven.

If they be Christians, that *Philo* speaks of Philo de vit. contempl. in his Book of a Contemplative Life, (*Eusebius* and *St. Jerome* think so) *St. Mark the Evangelist* it's like instructed them in these S. Basil. Ad Amphilo. can. 57. severities; for they us'd them, and were the wonder of the World; and who knows not how the succeeding Ages press'd this 58, 59, 72, 73. Self-revenge upon all those, that were fallen either into Adultery, or Idolatry, or Murder, and repented; and what severities the Concil. Ander. cyr. can. 2, 3, 4, 5, & seq. Church inflicted on them, how they oblig'd them to stand in a torn Garment at the Church-door, and weep, and court the Believers that enter'd into the Church, and beg of them to pray for them? How after this severity, they plac'd them among the *Catechumens*, then gave them leave to re-

ceive the Blessing of the Congregation, and when they had pass'd through all this Discipline, they were permitted at last to joyn with Believers in their Prayers and Sacraments.

*Terull. de
Pœnit. c. 8
9. & Cy-
prian de
Tapsis &
Epist. 31.*

Tertullian, who liv'd about the Year 230. after *Christ*, expresses these severities thus : Repentance is a Discipline of Humiliation and Prostration, and enjoyns such a Cover-sation, as provokes and allures God's Mercy. It determines what Meat the Penitent must eat, what Cloaths he must wear ; it bids him go and wallow in Ashes, lie in Sackcloth, throw Dust upon himself, let his Soul melt into Grief, and treat those Members scurvily that have been Instruments in sinning, to eat and drink nothing that is pleasing to the Pallate, but only so much as will keep Life and Soul together, to Pray, to Weep, to Sigh, to Howl, to Roar, to fall down at the Knees of God's Ministers, and to beg of all he meets with, to supplicate to God for him. This is Repentance. If you repent, you must, saith *Pacianus*, weep before the Church, lament your lost and sinful Life in a fordid Garment, you must pray, and roll on the Earth ; if any invite you to the *Bath*, or some such Divertisement, you must refuse to go ; if any bid you to a Feast, you must say, these things are for the happy, I have sinn'd against God, and am in danger to perish for ever, what should I do at Banquets, who have wrong'd

*Pacian.
Parans ad
Pœnot Bib-
lioth. Ep-
ist. 3.*

wrong'd the Lord? You must take the Poor by the Hand, beseech the Widow, lie at the Feet of the Presbyters, and beg of the Church to forgive you, and you must do any thing rather than perish. And accordingly *Natalius* the Confessor, when corrupted with Money, he had suffer'd himself to be made a Heretical Bishop, and afterward by a signal Providence became sensible of his Error; the first thing he did was to put Sackcloth and Ashes upon himself, and to break forth in a large stream of Tears, and fall down at the Feet of Bishop *Zephirinus*, and of the whole Clergy, nay, and of the Laity too, and to entreat them to weep with him, and seek God's Face, and the restoration of his Favour to him, and therefore the Author of the Sermons of Saints in St. *Austin's* Works, tell us, Repentance for Crimes and greater Sins must be attested by strong Cries and Tears, by Roaring and Howling, by voluntary Separation from the Communion of Saints, by Mourning, and by a long continu'd Sorrow: It is necessary, that he who hath sinn'd to the scandal of many, should repent to the edification of many. We must mourn on such Occasions for the loss of our Souls, as we bewail the dead Carcasses of our Friends. If a Man have lost a Wife or a Son, or a Woman her Husband, they tear their Hair, beat their Breast, continue in sadness, and shed Tears a great while together.

Thus

*Euseb Eccl.
Hist. lib. 5.
c. ult.*

*Sermon 14
de Sanctis.*

Thus must we deal with our forlorn Souls; Shall we take on thus for dead Flesh, which we cannot raise to Life again? And shall we not mourn for a Soul that hath been dead, and may by Repentance be brought to Life again? And upon this Account *Theo-*
Theodoret. 1. 5. c. 17. *dofius*, as great an Emperor as he was, repenting of the slaughter committed by his Order upon the *Thessalonians*, fell down upon his Face in the Church, his Soul with *David*, cleav'd to the Dust, he tore his Hair, beat his Forehead, and wash'd the Ground with his Tears. Be contented, saith St. *Am-*
Ambr. lib. ad Virg. corr. c. 8. *brose* to the Virgin that had suffer'd herself to be deflower'd, to undergo any labour, any shame, any disgrace in the World, so thou can'st but escape Eternal Fire; judge thyself with rigor and severity; break loose from the Cares of this Life, count thyself dead, think how thou mayst revive and live again; Put on a Mourning Garment, chastise thy polluted Members with due severities; Cut off thine Hair, which hath given occasion to Luxury; Let thine Eyes run down with Tears which have look'd lasciviously upon Man; Let thy Face grow pale, which once look'd fresh and lively with Impudence; Macerate thy Body, put on a careless Dress, crucify thy Senses, fright the People with thy Ashes and Hair-cloth; Let thy Heart melt like Wax, let this be thy Life, thus order thy Conversation, let this be the Dress of

of thy Repentance, and then thou wilt dare to hope if not for Glory, yet for freedom from Eternal Punishment. And the like Advice he gives to the Man that deflower'd her. Get thee into the Prison of Repentance, gird thy Bowels with Chains, macerate thyself with Sighs, beg the help of living Saints, throw thyself down at the Feet of the Elect, banish all Blandishments from thy Soul, and by continual weeping and mourning, cleanse thy Heart. To this purpose speaks the Author of the Epistle to *Susanna*, in St. *Jerome's Works*, the greatness of the wound in the Conscience, must ever be answer'd by the greatness of Repentance, and Repentance is not a matter of Words but Actions. And you then perform it, if you set before you the Glory from which you are fallen, the Book of Life from which your Name hath been blotted out, and the utter Darkness, where there is howling and gnashing of Teeth, and which you are become obnoxious to. And having fix'd this Principle in your Soul, That Repentance is the only Refuge after Baptism; you must think no Labour, no Rest, no Pains too much, nothing undecent or unhandsome to be freed from everlasting Torments. Think on these things, and become a severe Judge of your own Actions. In the first place you must bid farewell to all the Cares of this World, and look upon yourself as dead to this Earth, and let your only study

Opus. Hieron, tom. 9

study be, how to rise to Life again. Then take and put on a Mourning-weed, and punish thy Mind and Members with daily castigations. Cut off thy Hair, which hath been the occasion of thy Luxury. From thy Eyes let thy bitter Tears flow down, because by them thou hast defil'd thy Soul ; Let thy Face grow pale, which thy Sins have given a chearful lovely colour to ; Strow Ashes on thy Body, let thy Heart melt like Wax within thee, crucify thy Senses, which have let in the Poison. This is the Process of Repentance, and doing so, though thou may'st not hope for any high degree of Glory, yet thou may'st be confident, thou wilt be freed from everlasting Anguish ; so *Nineveh* escaped her Ruin. In this manner was the mighty *David* justify'd. He that spares not himself, him will the Almighty spare. Great Sickneses must have signal Cures ; great Crimes require great Satisfaction. On these Planks thou may'st swim out of the Gulf of Perdition. These are the Agonies, the Pangs of a true Repentance.

Chrysostom.
5. *Epistol.*
ad Theodor.
lapsum.

Of this *Theodorus* was so sensible, that being fallen into Fornication, and become sensible of his great Transgression, he went and retir'd from the World, shut himself up in a Cave, liv'd there the remainder of his Days upon Bread and Water, spent his time in Fasting, in Prayer, and in watering his Couch with Tears ; and indeed this Advice

was

was duly follow'd by the noble *Paula*, tho' Hieron. in vit. Paul Rom. she was guilty of no such Crimes. After her Husband's decease, she could never be persuaded to sit down at Table with a Man, though never so holy. Even in a Fever, she would not lie upon a soft Bed, but on the Ground upon a Mat. She bewail'd and wept over her little Sins, as much as if they had been the greatest Crimes; and when *St. Jerom* exhorted and admonish'd her not to spoil her Eyes with weeping, but preserve them for reading the holy Scripture; No, said she, this Face of mine must be besmear'd with Dirt, which formerly I have painted and patch'd. My Body must be afflicted, us'd coarsly, which formerly hath been given to carnal ease, and worldly delights; my frequent laughter must be reveng'd with perpetual weeping; my soft Linnen, and my precious Silks must be chang'd into uneasy Sackcloth, and I, who have endeavour'd to please the World and my Husband, must now learn to please Christ intirely.

St. Jerom himself was not backward in this Exercise, I wrapt myself up in Sackcloth, Hieron. Epistol. ad Eustoch. saith he, and struck the Members of my Body, which would scarce hang together, to the Ground, I remember I cry'd aloud, sometimes I joyn'd the Night to the Day, and mourn'd, and did not give over beating of my Body, till the Lord rebuking *Satan's* Angel, shed into my Soul Peace and Tranquility.
And

And of the same Judgment was St. *Chrysoſtom* who to fit himſelf for the holy Miniſtry, as ſoon as he was made Reader, retir'd into a Mountain, where, joyning himſelf to a *Syrian Hermit*, he learn'd Aſterity, Continence, Chaſtity and Mortification. In this Condition he ſpent four Years, and then to ſubdue the Luſts of the Fleſh more perfectly, he abſconded himſelf in a deſert place, where his Lodging was no other than the bare Ground, his Table no other than a great Stone, and his Exercise nothing but reading and ſtudy- ing the Scriptures, and maſtering his carnal Deſires and ſenſual Appetite.

And indeed about this time, *viz.* about the Year 390. after Chriſt, theſe Exercises began to be almoſt univerſal ; in *Egypt* eſpecially, Men us'd ſuch ſeverities upon themſelves, that we that never try'd them, would ſcarce believe that ever there were ſuch Men, or that they did thoſe mighty things which are recorded in Hiſtory : Soon after theſe times, Men that us'd theſe Aſterities began to ſink by little and little into an Opinion of Merit, and to look upon theſe Works as meritorious of God's Favour and Acceptance, not only for themſelves, but for others too, which Fancy ſpoil'd the whole Deſign, and made that a Sacrifice of Fools, which us'd with Humility and low Conceits of

of themselves, would have pass'd for excellent Devotion ; and under this Character of Merit and Satisfaction, the Church of *Rome* retains some of these severities at this Day, which made our Church at the first Reformation abolish the Abuse, yet not so as to forbid Christians the moderate use of them. The *Grecian, Ethiopian, Armenian* and *Coptick Churches* in the *East*, do also preserve them still, but much as the *Papists*, they use them as Compensations to God for the Sins they live in, which makes the Oblation odious.

The greatest severities among Christians in this Age, seem to be those which are us'd in *Egypt* by Men of the Order of (a) *St. Anthony*, and the *Carthusians* among the *Papists*; as to the former, their Rule obliges them not only to renounce Matrimony for ever, but to possess no Estate, to dwell in the Wilderness, to be cloth'd with Wool, to be girt with a Leather Girdle, to eat no Flesh, nor drink Wine, except great necessity compel them, to spend their time in Prayer and worshipping of God, and having their Minds always running upon God, Reading the Scriptures, sleeping upon a Mat or on the Earth, not to take off their Cloaths, to prostrate themselves 150. times a Day, which they

(a) *Present State of Egypt*, p. 181, 182, &c.

(b) Μετα- they call making so many (b) Repen-
 νοιαν ποι- tances. Some that are counted holier than
 ειν, & με- the rest, prostrate themselves on their Faces,
 ταυνοιαν. and Bellies, with their Arms a-crofs, three
 Βυλλαι. hundred times every Night, before they go
 Vid. Eu- to sleep.
 chol. Grac.
 in ord.
 Sacv. mi-
 nist. Est

Μετανοια μεγάλη, quæ fit ore manibusque terra affixis cum genuum inflexione & μετὰ σὶ minus corpus inflectant. Jac. Goar. in Euckol. p. 12. The Kalois upon Mount Athos kifs the ground, or make such Repentances and Prostrations Three hundred times every day, Ricaut of the Greek Church, c. 11.

(c) Vid. And in imitation of these, the (c) Carthu-
 Sur de vit. sians among the Papists wear Hair-cloth next
 SS. tom. 5. to their Skin, eat no Flesh at all, no not in
 & Hospin. Sicknefs, or extreme Necessity; eat no Fish
 de orig. neither, but what is freely bestow'd upon
 Mon. lib. 5. them, eat Bread with the Bran in it, never
 c. 7. speak to one another, never stir out of their
 own College, except the President and the
 Caterer, and live for the most part upon
 Bread, and Water, and Coleworts, and
 Pease, and Beans, &c. eat but once a Day,
 and all their Employment is Reading, Wri-
 ting, Praying and Labouring. But that
 which renders both the Severity of the for-
 mer, and the Austerities of the latter insigni-
 ficant in the sight of God, is, that the for-
 mer are forced to what they do, and the lat-
 ter hope to merit Heaven for themselves and
 others by it, and both lay a greater stress
 upon

upon these outward severities, than upon the inward frame and disposition of the Heart.

So that these outward severities are like a narrow Bridge, over which a Man must walk with very great cautiousness and circumspection, for there is danger both on the Right and Left-hand, and he that doth not carefully look to his steps may fall, and while he flatters himself with hopes of Heaven, exclude himself from it.

To direct my Reader in this Point, and to acquaint him with the limits of this Exercise, how far these severities may be lawful, and in what Cases expedient, and wholesome, and practicable, I shall lay down these following Rules and Observations.

I. Whenever they are us'd, all opinion of Merit must be laid aside. Merit is Non-sense in Divinity, and though the Word occurs frequently in ancient Writers; yet it is plain to any judicious Reader, that they meant by Meriting no more, than obtaining or getting what God had promis'd. Since we must allow and confess, that we are Creatures, the greatest holiness and strictness imaginable, can never come under that Notion strictly taken; for the distance betwixt the Creator and the Creature is infinite; and Man by being a Creature, owes himself and all he hath, and all he can do to the Creator; and the Mercy of

being Created, or receiving a Being from nothing, and being continually preserv'd (not to mention the vast Work of Redemption, and the innumerable other Blessings God hath both promised and conferr'd on Man) is so stupendous a Condescension, and a Bounty so astonishing, that it is impossible any Creature should deserve any thing at the Creator's Hands. The Angels themselves that sin not, cannot deserve any favour from him, for being Creatures, all they do is nothing but Duty, and is no more but what God may justly expect from them, as their Maker and Conservator, as much as a Master may challenge his Servant's Industry. *Doth he thank that Servant, because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not, so likewise ye, when ye have done all that ye are commanded to do, say we are unprofitable Servants, we have done that which was our duty to do, saith Christ most truly, Luke 17. 9, 10.*

And if you reply here, that these Severities are not things commanded, and therefore being Free-will-Offerings, over and above what is commanded, it is just they should deserve more than ordinary Favour at God's Hands, I answer, That though I cannot say, that they are no where commanded, yet let's suppose they are not, still these Severities in themselves are not at all acceptable to God, but only as they are accompany'd with other Duties that are expressly com-

commanded, without which God looks upon them no more, than on a Butcher's killing of an Ox or Sheep, and being only Appendixes to such Duties as are expressly commanded, and not acceptable but for those Duties, as will appear more in the Sequel, they cannot be suppos'd to be so considerable as to Merit; Nay, should a Man use the greatest Severities, that were ever used by Men, and should he exceed all Mankind in such Austerities, even the *Indian Brachmans*, and put himself voluntarily to the greatest Pain and Tortures imaginable for a Thousand Years together, the severity, which at the best is but finite, and attended with regrets and imperfections, could never deserve a Glory infinite, perfect and eternal, for in merit there must be an equality, or parity between the Work, and the Reward, and no Man can be said to deserve that, for which he takes not proportionable Pains. And therefore he that thinks to merit Heaven by such Severities, affronts the Almighty, and merits Hell and Everlasting Fire.

That *Fero* was certainly distracted (*Simon Hieron. de Ben Fochai* was his Name) that boasted, he had so well deserv'd at the Hands of God, by his Righteousness and Severity of Life, that if he had been so minded, he could have Redeemed all the Men and Women that should be born after him, from the everlasting Wrath of God; and if his Son *Eleazer*

S. Fidelib.
2. c. 2.

should but joyn the Merits of his Righteousness with his, they might go near to save the whole World from being condemned in the last Day. This is *Bedlam-talk*, and yet it were to be wish'd, that the Church of *Rome* did not participate of this Madness, when they talk of the Treasury of their Church, the Merits of their Saints, and their Works of Supererogation, whereby they pretend to free many Souls out of Purgatory; and how such a wicked Man wrapt up in a Monk's Habit at his Death, hath been immediately transported into Heaven, &c. One would admire how Men in their Wits can talk at this rate, but that I see even *David* could feign himself mad at the Court of *Achish* for his Interest, and then no marvel if these Men, finding what Grist this Doctrine of Merit brings to their Mill, venture to be extravagant in their expressions concerning it.

II. Whenever these Severities are used, they must not be used to give God satisfaction for the Sins we have committed. To give God satisfaction by any thing but the Cross and Death of Christ, is an Expression which should sound harsh in a Christian's Ear, and be banish'd from the Confines of Divinity.

*Bellarmin. de
pœnit. lib.
4. c. 7.*

Here the Church of *Rome* exceeds, and deviates again from the Primitive Rule, and while they look upon these Severities as satisfactions given to God for the guilt of the Temporal

Temporal Punishment, that remains after Remission of Sins, they seem to follow no Rule but that of their own Fancy; for the Scripture is a stranger to this Notion of Satisfaction; and though *David* and other Saints have used these Severities, yet we never read, that they intended them as Satisfaction to God, whom they had offended, but had other ends in them, such as we shall name as we go along; It is not to be deny'd but that the Fathers use the Word Satisfaction often, when they discourse of such Mortifications; but by those Satisfaction, they do not mean Satisfaction given to an offended God, but to the Church, and the People of God, as signs whereby our Fellow-Christians may conclude, that our Repentance is real, and free from Hypocrisy.

Nor, III. Must they be us'd in hopes that God will dispence with our Sins for the future, much less that he will pass by those that we have committed, without sincere Repentance, meerly for these Severities: Alas! it is easier to punish the Body, than to leave a Sin; and while a Sinner can enjoy his Lusts, what need he care, if for a Day or two he is a little rigid and unkind to his Flesh, that unkindness will quickly wear out again, and the Body fitted for commission of new Offences. God doth not value these Severities at this rate; a penitent Heart is more pleasing to him than a thousand Lashes,

Vid. Bonav. Legend. Franc. c. 13.

and a Soul that grieves for offending a gracious God, looks lovelier in his Eyes, than a bloody Side, or the imaginary Wounds of *St. Francis*. He that thinks that God will let him sin, because he whipp'd himself on such a Day, takes God for some Heathen Deity; and indeed to lay a greater stress upon afflicting the Body than upon forsaking Sin, is to contradict that Notion the Holy Ghost delivers of God, that he must be wor-

Joh. 4. 24. shipp'd in Spirit and in Truth.

Nor, IV. Must they be used with an unwilling Mind; where the inward Repentance of the Soul makes the Will resolute in the use of them, they may pass for an excellent Offering, but being perform'd by force, or merely because a Superior commands them, this evacuates the vertue of the Affliction. Hence those among the *Papists*, that either suffer themselves to be hired to perform the Ceremony of Self-affliction on *Good-friday*, or being once engaged in such an Order, use them not out of any sense of Sin within, but because the Rule of their Order doth oblige them to it, whatever Conceits they may entertain of the *Opus operatum*, or Work itself, God still looking to the Spring from which all these Mortifications flow, they prevail no more, than the *Indians* going to Church, merely because their Masters force them, is an Argument of God's sending his Spirit into their Hearts, crying, *Abba Father.*

Apost. lib. 5.

Nor,

Nor, V. Is it fit, that weak or sickly Persons should use them. Though many Christians in the Primitive Times, would thus afflict themselves, notwithstanding their bodily Infirmities; yet we find, 1 *Tit.* 5 23. that in these Cases Men must use Moderation. The Body being disabled, I do not see how the Soul can perform those noble Operations she is otherwise capable of, no more than a Workman, whose Tools are nought, can promise you an excellent piece of Manufacture. The Body is a Servant of the Soul, and we know, if our Servants be out of order, our Work must be left undone. Strong and healthy Bodies will bear it better, and if they lose something of their florid Complexion there is no great hurt done. Mortification to some Bodies would be a preservative of Health, and such voluntary Afflictions would spend many of those superfluous Humours, that disorder them. In all these severities Men must be their own Physicians, and consider what their Bodies are able to bear, and what they are not. And yet laziness and softness of Life, and love to carnal Ease, must not make us pretend that our Bodies will not bear them; This is best known after we have had Experience, and when we foresee a signal Danger, it will then be time to forbear them. Our Bodies are able to endure a great deal more than we are willing to believe, and the reason why People are weary-

of any thing that is irksome to Flesh and Blood, is, because they lie bury'd in Lust and Sensuality. He that is weak already, had not need to make himself weaker than he is, and sickness is for the present severity enough to subdue in us all disorderly Affections, and in these Cases it is infallibly true what the Apostle saith, that *bodily Exercise profits little*, 1 Tim. 4. 8.

And as these Severities are not fit to be used by sickly and weakly Persons, so neither must they be used by the strong to the disservice of their Souls. In a Word, the Body must not be used so coarsly as to make it useless to the Soul; and therefore the Saints of old observed most truly, that our Bodies are like Garments, if you take care of them they will last a great while, but if they be totally neglected, they will wear out in a very short time; to mortify the Body is one thing, to kill it is another, and he that would not be guilty of Self-murder, must not be too lavish in these severities. It was a good Answer of St. *Anthony* the Hermit to a Huntsman that had taken notice of his former Austerities, and saw him laughing and merry with his Brethren that came to see him, and was scandaliz'd at it; *Bend thy Bow*, saith he, he did so; *Bend it more*, he obey'd him: *Bend it yet more*; No, answer'd the Huntsman, *then it will break*. *Just so*, saith he, *is it with these Severities, too much of them*

*Pelag. lib.
10 de discip.
cert.*

Spoils

The Best Exercise.

451

spoils all, but the moderate use of them may preserve both Soul and Body to Eternity.

I do not believe it was not possible without a Miracle, for *Besarion* to stand Forty Nights in a Hedge of Thorns, that continually prick'd him, though some do confidently report it; and if he did so, I do not see of what use his Body could be to his Soul after such Torments. Nor do I know what to say to that Man in *Dionysius*, that being at Prayer, and a Scorpion biting him, and shedding Poyson into his Foot, insomuch that it swell'd immediately, pain'd him exceedingly, and convey'd the Infection to his very Heart, yet would not move from his place, nor take care to resist the noxious Animal, till he had done his Prayer; for tho' he was restor'd to his former Health by the Prayer of *Pachomius*, yet no rational Man can think well of such severities, where Men may prevent their Death, and will not, and I know not, whether it be not tempting of God, rather than trusting him, where he hath put the means to save our Lives into our Hands, and we neglect them.

Nor, VI. Must the stress of Repentance be laid on these Severities. This I have already touch'd upon, and I cannot but mention it again, because without great Care and Watchfulness Men are apt to be deluded by the Devil into misconstructions of this Exercise, as if God were more pleas'd with
this

*Dionys.
Exig. in
vit. Pa-
chom. c. 50.*

this Exercise, than with Repentance. Men may possibly be pleas'd with these outward Austerities more than with inward Reformation; but God, who sees further, cannot. His piercing Eye looks farther than the outward Rind, and if the Root be sound, loves all the Branches that springs from it; if the Foundation be good casts a favourable Eye on all the Ornaments of the Structure: This Root, this Foundation, is a sincere Repentance, or a Heart enamour'd with the Beauty of Holiness. If this Rod buds and blossoms, and bears such Fruit, it is accepted in *Christ Jesus*; without a contrite Heart Severities are but a deceitful Bush, whereby Men are deceiv'd into a good Opinion, that there is excellent Wine to be found in the House, but find nothing but Gall and Vinegar, a stately Gate to a Swine-stye, and Paint laid upon a homely Face, which makes the Mortification ridiculous. And therefore,

VII. These Severities must be only Demonstrations of the sincerity of our Repentance; when they are used, they must be used to convince ourselves, and others, that we do in good earnest abhor the Sins we have been guilty of. When our Hearts grieve for the Provocations we have given to the Almighty, and Temptations come in, and our frightened Consciences would make us believe our Sorrow is but counterfeit, there is no better way to dash, and beat back the despairing

spairing suggestion, than by offering some Violence to our Bodies; for being naturally Lovers of Ease and Softness, when we can thus deny ourselves, we give very good evidence, that what we profess is real, and that our Tears are flowing from a Heart sensible of the Majesty and Purity of the great Creator. And this was the reason, why the noble *Fabiola*, repenting of her being marry'd to another Husband, while the former, from whom she had been divorc'd, was living, came into the Church with her Hair disshriivel'd, with her Hands and Neck, and Lips all dirty, and bemi'd with lying in Dust and Ashes for some time; and for this *St. Jerome* commends her highly, because hereby she discover'd the reallity and sincerity of her Repentance.

Vid. Hieron. Hist. 30.

VIII. These Severities are of great use in our endeavours to despise the World, and to lead a truly Spiritual Life. Indeed our Love of the World hath need of violent Corrosives. It's a Distemper which is not to be dispell'd by Flattery, nor is it cured by a few angry Words, such as *Eli* gave his two Sons *Hophni* and *Phineas*; without it be corrected and lash'd the Weed will over-run the Ground, and endanger the Soul even in the midst of ordinary Devotion. The Body is ever a Bosom friend to this Love of the World, and therefore if the Body be proceeded against with harshness, this Love feels the smart, and

and begins to abate in its grandeur and loftiness. This Love being put to pain, its satisfactions grow faint, and it begins to lower its Topsails, and to dwindle away into nothing; such Mustard being laid on these Breasts, the Child soon gets an aversion from sucking them, and this bitterness drives the Soul to sweeter Objects in Heaven. And upon this account it was, that *Sylvanus* the Bishop of *Philopolis* went always in Sandals made of Hay, even in the City of *Constantinople*; and the rural Bishops in the Diocess of *Rome*, deny'd themselves of all worldly Retinue and Splendor, while those of *Rome* liv'd in all the pomp and bravery the World could afford.

Socrat. lib.
7. c. 36.
Ammian.
Marcellin.
lib. 27.

IX. Either to subdue a Corruption, or to prevent yielding to a Sin, these Severities may be very helpful. Such severities in some measure fright away the Corruption, and make *Satan* himself stand amaz'd at what we are going to do. Seeing the Love of God so strong in us, that for his sake we can put ourselves to great Inconveniencies, he departs, and finding that God's Favour is dearer to us than our ease and interest, his next conclusion is, that he must find out other Subjects to impose, and work upon. When *Hilarion* apply'd himself to the subduing of his Lusts, he spake to his Body, *Come, thou Beast, I will not feed thee with Barley, but with Chaff; I'll so order thee, that thou shalt not kick; I'll subdue thee with Hunger and Thirst;*

Hieron. in
vit. Hila-
tion.

Thirst; I'll lay Weight upon thee; I'll afflict thee by Heats and Cold, that thou shalt long for Victuals more than for Lustful Objects. And so he did, labouring hard when the Sun shin'd hottest; and praying and singing all the while he was at Work; and thus he became Master of his Passions. In the same manner Zenon travelling one Day through *Palestina*, and seeing a Bed of excellent Cucumbers, a Fruit he naturally lov'd, and finding temptations in his Breast to steal some from the Owner, it came into his Mind, that Thieves, when taken by the Magistrate, are usually tormented, *I must therefore, saith he, try whether I can endure Torments, before I steal;* and accordingly he laid this Punishment upon himself for coveting another Man's Goods, and stood five Days in the Sun frying his Body in the intolerable heat, and being able to endure it no longer, *I see, saith he, I must not steal, for I cannot endure Torments;* and so he pass'd on without gratifying his desires.

X. If you ask me, What Severities are fit to be used upon such Occasions? I must answer, That it is impossible to prescribe to all Men the same severities, for their Bodies, Constitutions, Tempers, and Inclinations are different, and consequently, that which may do well with one, may not be so proper for another; I will therefore set down some Examples, and leave it to them, that think it expedient to make use of these Exercises,

cises, to chuse such, as they find least injurious to their Constitution. I have read of a Holy Man in *Egypt*, who being tempted by a Harlot to Acts of Uncleanneſs, and feeling the Temptation work, lighted a Candle, and burnt his Fingers one by one, till by the ſmart and pain of his Fleſh, he forgot all thoughts of Impurity. One *Nathyras* being taken out of an obſcure Hermitage, where he liv'd poorly and abſtemiouſly, and mortify'd himſelf to a very great degree, and made Biſhop, liv'd now more ſeverely than ever, lay harder, deny'd himſelf more than he did when he was in his ſolitary Condition. Becauſe, ſaid he, I am now under greater Temptations. *Pachomius* wore Hair-cloth next to his Skin ſometimes to keep his Body under. One in *Cuziba*, if he heard of any poor Man, that had not wherewithal to buy Corn to ſow his Ground, would go, and without the poor Man's knowledge buy ſome, and ſow it for him; ſometimes he would take Bread and Water with him, and ſit in the Highway that is between *Jordan* and *Jeruſalem*, and thereby relieve needy Travellers: Where he ſaw Men carry great Burdens upon their Backs, when they came to a Hill, he would help them to carry them up the Hill; and ſometimes he would carry up their Children; if he met with any that were naked, he would give him his Cloak; and if he found any that was dead by the way, he would

*Mofeb.
prat. Spirit.
vit. c. 24.*

would go and bury him with Psalms and Prayers. *Serapion* sold himself, and became a Servant on purpose, that he might have the opportunity to convert the Sinner he sold himself too, much like Bishop *Paulinus*, who pawn'd himself for a poor Widow's Son, and went into Captivity to deliver him out of it. St. *James* the Apostle, saith St. *Chrysostome* pray'd not with a Cushion under him, but with his bare Knees so fix'd to the Ground, that they became like Camels Hoofs, hard, and insensible. Others, when any lustful Thought came upon them, would take some great Burden upon their Shoulders, and carry it up and down till they were quite spent. Others, that have been single Men, as Christ advis'd, that young Man, *Matth.* 19. 21. have sold all they had, and given it to the Poor. Others, as *Christ* enjoyns, *Matth.* 5. 39. have, according to the Letter, turn'd their left Cheek to him, that hath smote them on the right, and have gone two Miles with him, that would have compell'd them to go one; others, as the Apostles did, *1 Cor.* 4. 12, 13. when they were revil'd, they blest'd, when they were defam'd, they entreated; others, when they have found a regret upon their Spirits, that they had given away too much to the Poor, have gone back, and doubled the Sum they had given away, on purpose to cross the evil Motion, as it is said of the famous Author
of

Heraclid.
Parad. c.
24. Gregor.
Dialog. lib.
3. c. 1.

of the Book of Martyrs; others have parted with their dearest Profit, which they have believ'd was unjustly gotten, though they became Beggars by it; others have put their Flesh to pain with Iron Pricks, Nettles and Thorns, that they might not think of that Sin, they were prompted to; others have sold their Coaches, and rich Laces, and Ornaments, and learn'd to go on Foot, and in plain Garments, that they might be able to do more good in this present World; others have stinted themselves in their Diet, and either eaten only of one Dish, or have eaten no Meat at all, but Herbs and Roots of the Earth, as I have shew'd in the beginning of this Discourse; others have punish'd themselves with some Days silence, for speaking things which were not convenient, &c. These various Examples, I mention not, because I think they require imitation in every particular, but to shew, how he that means to be Master of the same Vertue, or intends to prevent and subdue the same Sins, that these Men mortify'd, may some such way arrive to the same Felicity and Victory.

XI. Whenever any of these Severities are used, they must be used with great Humility; to grow proud upon the use of them, is to pervert their Design, and to fall into an high Opinion of our own Holiness, is to wound Religion with her own Sword; I must

must not despise others, that use them not, nor think that I am the better Man, because my Neighbour is not acquainted with these Mysteries. My Sins may require that, which another's may not; and if I do excel him in this Point, he may overtop me in another. These Rigors must be carry'd on with secrecy, and I must not be ambitious to let other Men know what I do in private, that they may admire me. I may indeed speak of them, where I can edify my Fellow-Christian by them, but must not therefore think the worse of my Brother, because he will not do as I do. I must always think very low of myself, and believe that I have need of such Plaisters, which others, that are more Righteous than I, may neglect, and yet be in a safe Condition.

XII. Discretion must be the great guide in these Severities, so I said in the beginning, and this is it that must govern this Chariot, else with *Phaeton*, it will set the Course of Nature on fire; where this Light hath been wanting, Men have fallen into Pits and Ditches, from which they have been pull'd out with great difficulty, and sometimes have perish'd in them. Discretion must take care, that all these Rules I mention'd be observ'd; if this Watchman falls asleep, the City may soon be taken by the Enemy. These Severities are like Chymical Medicines, as they do great good, if skilfully apply'd, so

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they may do much harm, if made use of by an ignorant Practitioner; Antiquity gives us an account of several Inconveniencies Men have run into for want of Discretion. Some have been perswaded into so high a Conceit of their Holiness, that they have expected Miracles; others have been deluded into an Opinion, that they were impeccable, and by that means have been expos'd to great Falls and Errors. Discretion, whether our own, or some Faithful Minister's, will teach a Man to hold an even Course, and to avoid the Rocks that are on both sides of him, and the Vessel thus guided, may bring us safe to the everlasting Harbor.

And now, I must say to those that read these Lines, as Christ said to his Disciples in the Point of abstaining from Marriage, *Mat. 19. 12.* He that is able to receive it, let him receive it; I cannot, and dare not press the Severities as absolutely necessary; yet thus much I will be bold to tell you, That the Saints of old thought Heaven could not be had without them. They verily believ'd, that there must be a conformity to Christ, not only in active Obedience, but in Suffering too; and where God did send no Affliction upon them, they thought themselves oblig'd to inflict some on themselves: This produc'd that vast number of Virgins, wherein the Church then triumph'd; By Hair-cloth and Sackcloth, and denying their Bodies,

dies even Necessaries, by mean Attire, and carelesness in their Dress, and deforming themselves, and going bare-foot, and enduring Heat, Cold, Hunger, Thirst and Nakedness, they became Conquerors of their Lusts, and Spectacles to Angels and to Men. Alas! you that at this Day call yourselves Christians, and are fond of all the Bravery that the Silk-Worm and the curious Hand can make, (to the Female Sex I speak particularly) that must have such Washes for your Skin, such Paint for your Cheeks, and such Patches for your Faces, and go from one Glass to another to see whether this Curl is in its exact Figure, whether this Lace fits well, whether this Meen becomes you, or whether you are entirely Modish, that keep such a stir with your Fans and Instruments of Pride in publick Prayers, are more afraid to hurt your Knees than your Souls, and more discompos'd, if jussled, than if you lost God's Favour, and practice no more Religion, than is just consistent with your Lusts, that are more concern'd, if your Hoods and lighter Vails, and flowing Mantles do but sit amiss, than if we thunder out God's Judgments against you, that must serve God with Ease and Elbow-room, are discompos'd and disorder'd with every Trifle; and as soon as the Lord's-Day is over, go from one Playhouse to another, and know not which way to look for Starchedness and

Wantonness, and exactly observe the mode and figure of your Gate, and conform accurately to the vain Gesture the Dancing-Master taught you, and are careful about nothing so much, as about being dress'd *A-la-mode*, and whose Discourses are chiefly about Fashions and Fineries: Alas! Had you liv'd in the Primitive Times, there is no Man would have taken you for Christians. The Primitive Saints would have reckon'd you may be among the *Gnosticks*, or among the better sort of Heathens, but they would have wonder'd at your Impudence, if you had call'd yourselves Christians; for they look'd upon all those Gauds that now you doat on, as part of that Pomp and Glory of the World, which they had abjur'd in Baptism. How you come to be Christians in this Age, Heaven knows, I am afraid you are none of God's making.

The Primitive Saints were such Enemies to all Vanity, that they would scarce allow the Female Sex any Looking-Glasses to behold their Faces in, which made some use Vessels of Oyl to behold themselves; and they took none to be Christians that did not conform in Habit, and Dress, and Behaviour to Christ, as well as in Doctrine. *Tertullian* makes himself very merry with those that pretended to be Christians, and call'd for such a Bodkin to dress their Hair, and the Blushes of such a Paper to beautify

beautify their Faces, and fasted with delicate Wines, as Persons whose Religion could not be treated of, but with Jest and Mockery.

The Christians in those Days liv'd like People that had not their Portion in this Life; their Pomp lay all in Holiness and all their Bravery in making their Souls rich and beautiful; and indeed, where so much Cost, and Time, and Pains, is bestow'd upon dressing the outward Man, the inward commonly goes like a Beggar, or lies unregarded, where their Condition and Dignity required difference in Cloathing, they wore may be Sackcloth next to their Skin, to remember, that though they were in the World, yet they were not of the World.

The Age we live in will not bear these Severities, Mens Lusts have made that necessary, which heretofore would scarce have been thought convenient, so strangely is Religion alter'd from what it was; and let no Man tell me here, that to preach up Severities, is to teach People to turn Heathens again; for the Priests of *Baal cut themselves with Knives and Lancers, till the Blood gush'd out upon them*, 1 Kings 18. 28. We urge no such Severities, as shall disable the Body from doing the Work that is proper for it, nor do we look upon God as a Tyrant, or a Deity, that delights in Blood, as those Heathens did, much less do we think that such Severities merit God's Favour, or his Audience, as
H h 3 they

they did ; No, the Severities which we commend to Christians, are such as the Primitive Fathers used, Severities which nothing but Love to God produces, and a hatred of Sin, and a willingness to be rid of those Lusts and Temptations which do so easily beset us.

Nor is this to reduce Men to Popery ; for I have already shew'd how the Papists do abuse these Rigors, and pointed at the Rocks that must be shunn'd : In matters of these Bodily Severities, the Papists have not forg'd a new Doctrine, but have only turn'd an old Doctrine into Superstition, and run it into excess and extravagance, which bitter Rind being par'd away, the Fruit may be wholesome, and like the Leaves of the Tree of Life, for the healing of the Nations.

Rev. 22.2.

In vain doth the slothful Sinner plead, that God commands no such Severities ; I believe, if he look'd into the Bible with Seriousness and Attention, he would find more Commands, that urge these Severities, than he is aware of. The 5th and 19th Chapters of St. *Matthew*, the 6th of St. *Luke*, and the 12th of the *Romans*, diligently consider'd, will convince a Rational Man, that the Holy Ghost is no Enemy to these Severities ; and suppose there were no express Commands for it, as long as we have so many Examples of Saints before us, that have us'd them, and as long as we are commanded to imitate

imitate those that have gone before us in their Holiness, these Examples will not want much of the Nature of peremptory Commands.

But it is very common with Men, that are for an easy Religion, to find out Excuses. No wonder if Men, whose God is their Belly, whose Glory is their Shame, and who mind earthly Things, speak against these Severities. It is their Interest to talk against them, and they would be undone, if their Guts should want those soft Morsels they us'd to feed upon: Their Lusts tremble at these Rigors, and therefore they must be unlawful. Nothing is Religion with them, that crosses their sensual Appetite, though in good truth Christianity is nothing else but crossing our sensual Appetite. It is true, no Man yet hated his own Flesh; but still these Severities are no signs of Mens hating their own Flesh, but certain Marks, that a Man loves his own Flesh, and that he is willing to save his Soul and Body in the Day of our Lord Jesus. Without doubt he loves himself most, that denies himself most, and no Man believes a Heaven and a Reward to come, like him, that will not allow himself the Comfort and Ease of sensual Pleasures here; such a Man shews that he is not of this World, but that he is chosen out of the World, and hath laid up his Treasure in another. Our Blessed Redeemer, that com-

manded Sea and Earth, might certainly have liv'd better, and more to his Ease, if he had been minded so to do, than he did; he that bid *Peter* take up a Fish out of the Sea, and told him he should find a piece of Money in the Fish, might as well have commanded all the Riches in the Sea, and bid his Disciples take them up, as they had occasion; but no, he chose an humble, despicable, self-denying Life, to shew, that thus his Followers must do, for the Glory, which is set before them; and because he made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, therefore God did highly exalt him, and gave him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of *Jesus* every Knee should bow: I am not ignorant that Christ did many things suitable to the great Design he came for, and for our sakes became Poor, that we might be Rich; but still Christ's Life is Exemplary, as well as Expiatory; and though we cannot imitate him in his extraordinary Fasts and Miracles, yet the Apostles seem every where to intimate, that if we mean to inherit the Glory he enter'd into, we must do what he did, meaning, what is possible for us to follow him in; his Steps we are to tread, and accordingly the Primitive Christians we find did imitate him in most of his Self-denials, things for which we do admire them, yet cannot find in our Hearts to follow

low

low them. We live, as if there were no other World, and whatever there may be within, there appears little without to convince a Spectator that we seek another Life. Our greediness after the Comforts of this Life, discovers how little we believe a future Recompence; and there appears so little in our Lives that looks like labouring after a future Happiness, that one would think we believe not one Word of the Bible. We are most concern'd for a Livelihood, and instead of seeking first God's Kingdom, and its Righteousness, the first thing we seek, is to get an Estate, and a comfortable Subsistence, and then we may take up a little more Devotion than formerly we did. This is it, we would fain live plentifully and bravely here, and enter upon a more plentiful and glorious Estate hereafter; whereas the Scripture seems to make this World, and that to come, things opposite and contrary, and the ways of Living in order to the Enjoyment of these two totally different; and it was the belief of Christians in the purer Ages, that it was impossible to Reign with Christ hereafter, without suffering with him here, and none of them thought of living with Christ in Heaven, except they dy'd with him here on Earth, *i. e.* dy'd to the needless Comforts and Pleasures of this Life, and liv'd
like

like Men of another Country. They gather'd so much from Christ's saying, *Luke 6. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.* *Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have receiv'd your Consolation; Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger; Wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep; Blessed be ye Poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God; Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled; Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh.* Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the Loving-kindnesses of the Lord. I cannot but mention here *St. Austin's Words in his Manual.* *O my Soul, were we to endure Torments for some Tears Day by Day; were we to suffer the Pains of Hell-Fire for a considerable time, in order to see Christ Jesus in his Glory, and to be joined to the Blessed Society of Triumphant Saints: Were it not worth suffering all this to be partakers of so great, so vast, so stupendious a Glory; Come on then, let Devils prepare their Temptations, and make their Arrows sharp against me; let my Body be broke through Fasting; let Sackcloth press my Flesh; let great Labours burden my outward Man; let frequent Watchings dry up my moisture; let this Man clamour against me; let another molest me; let Cold and Frost bow me down; let my Heart grumble; let the Heat burn*

Aug. Manual. c. 15.

burn me; let my Head ake; let my Breast burn; let my Stomach be full of Wind; let my Face grow pale; let me be weak all over; let my Life be consum'd with Grief, and my Tears with Mourning; let Rottenness enter into my Bones, and under me let Worms and Maggots crawl. None of these things shall move me, neither count I my Life dear, so I may but gain Rest in the Day of Visitation, and ascend to Converse with the People prepar'd for the Lord. For O! What Glory will the Saints possess there! How great will be their Joy, when they shall shine as the Sun in the Firmament! When God shall number his People, and advance them according to the several degrees of their Goodness and Holiness, and shall reward them according to their Righteousness, when he shall give them for Temporal, Celestial Things; for Trifles they have lost for him, great and ample Treasures! Behold, what an accumulation of Happiness it will be, when the Lord shall lead his Saints to take a view of his Father's Glory, and make them sit down with him in Heavenly Places, that God may be All in All.

Thus spoke the Christian Father, and what he spoke he practised: And lest any of us after all that hath been said, should use Tergiversations, and make Excuses and Apologies for his neglect, I shall conclude
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Maimonid.

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all with a Direction out of Maimonides. How shall a Man arrive, saith he, to these Vertues? He must get a Habit of them, and to get this Habit, he must fall to work, and exercise himself, and do it the second and third time, as hi doth in lesser Vertues. He must continually return to his Task, till it become easy to him, and the Toil and Weariness of it vanish, and these Vertues become one with his Soul.

The Prayer.

O God to whom Vengeance belongs, shew thyself. My Sins are mine Enemies, my Corruptions the Foes that persecute me, O shew me thy Salvation. My sensual Desires plead for Tendernefs, and because they would not be displeased, they suggest Motives and Reasons why I should spare myself. They regard not what becomes of my Soul hereafter; and so they can but enjoy present Rest, they think not of the Torments that will follow. But my Soul sees how the Scene will change, when God will come to Judgement. O my God, I am in danger! Let me spare no cost, no pains to be free from it. Where gentler means will not free me from the Corruptions which do so easily beset me, O let me not be afraid of using more violent Remedies. O that I were but more concern'd about the Life to come! O that I had more lively Apprehensions

prehensions of it! O that I had that view
of the Terrors of the Lord, that my Soul
might be convinc'd of the necessity of taking
the Kingdom of Heaven by Violence! I am
sensible of the hurt my Lusts and Passions
have done me: Fill my Soul, O God, with
a holy Rage against them, that I may drive
them out by force, when softer Persuasions
will do no good. Had not I better endure
some Inconvenience here, than be forced at
last to make Tears my meat Day and
Night to all Eternity! O persuade me to
lose all rather than the Joys set before me!
Shall I see thy Saints, who had the clearest
Apprehensions of thy Will, run, and sweat,
and toil for a future Bliss, and shall I
imagine, that Laziness will procure that
Kingdom? O Lord, leave me not. Bid
me rise, and strive to apprehend that for
which I am also apprehended of Christ
Jesus. I fight under the Banner of the
best of Princes, O let me so run that I may
obtain, and hear the Voice of the Bride-
groom, Enter into thy Master's Joy. This
will recompence all. If I arrive to this,
I shall be no loser by thy Service. I have
followed the World too long, and have got
nothing but vanity and vexation of Spirit.
It promised me much, but my Soul is
empty still. If once I ascend into that
City, where all Tears shall be wip'd away,
where I shall not need the light of the Sun,
and

and Moon, and Stars, where God himself is the everlasting Light: Whatever Troubles, whatever Miseries I went through here, they will all be forgotten, they will all be swallowed up, they will all be lost in that vast Ocean of Light and Glory. O make me weary of this Wilderness. I have wander'd too long in this Desert. Heaven is my Home. Let that engross my Desires, my Hopes, my Expectations, my Joy, my Love, my Affections. I am a stranger upon Earth, let me live like a stranger here, Draw me, draw me, thou Everlasting Magnet, that I may cling to thee, and neither Death, nor Life, neither Prosperity, nor Adversity, neither the Smiles, nor the Frowns of the World, may separate me from that Love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.



LETTER

TO A

Person of Quality,

Concerning the

HEAVENLY LIVES

OF THE

Primitive Christians.

SIR,

THE great Sence you have of the Narrowness of the Way, and the Straitness of the Gate, which leads to Life, hath made you very often importunate with me to give you an Account of a little Book, which *Fronto the Learned Canon of Paris Writ, Concerning the Heavenly Lives of the Primitive Christians*; not but that there is a larger and better Account given of that Subject by a late Writer of our Church; but, because you hoped, the smallness of the Treatise might be a temptation to Readers to peruse it, who oftentimes are frightened with the bulk and

and vastness of the Volume. I have at last obey'd your Commands; and though what I have done is not so much a Translation, as a Paraphrase; and the Liberty I have taken to rectify some things, that were needless, and to add here and there some Passages out of ancient Authors, as were proper and necessary, seem to be bold, and unusual; yet, as it is, you have it; and I was the more willing to let it go abroad in company of this Book, because it may serve to illustrate some Passages in the Exercises I have been describing.

*An Account of
Fronto's
Letter to
the Archbishop
of Roan.*

It is in a manner impossible to consider the first beginning and original of the Church, and to reflect on the Cradle, as it were, and Swadling-Cloaths of that Body whereof we are Members, without speaking something like Paradoxes, and Mysteries. The first Christians, though newly Born, yet there is nothing to be seen in them that's any way Childish, or so mean as to offend a Judicious Eye, or unworthy the Esteem and Approbation of the gravest Philosopher; and the Church in that Age, though an Infant, yet from its Birth, was so lusty and vigorous, that though like *Hercules* it never crush'd Snakes and Vipers in its Cradle, yet its Attempts and Enterprizes were more Masculine; for it conquer'd Tygers, Lyons, and what is worse, Fire and Flames, and the sharpest Torments. It knew nothing of the

Infirmities,

Infirmities and Weaknesses of a tender Age, but did in its Youth things becoming the seriousness and sobriety of the oldest Men. And though its Growth was prodigious, and its Merits increased with its Years, yet even upon its first entring into the World, its bigness and vastness seem'd to vie with that of the Earth, for it introduced a new World into the Universe.

Such was the Beginning and first Institution of the Christian Church, that in it we find Men, who voluntarily became little Children, Children who in Wisdom exceeded Patriarchs, Virgins, who had the Prudence and Gravity of Matrons, and Matrons endow'd with Virginal Modesty and Chastity. Men of Gray-Hairs, and old in Years, but Children in Malice, Pride and Ambition; and it was hard to say, which were the Old, and which the Young Disciples; for the younger sort strove to equal, if not exceed, the elder in Devotion.

Holiness was their Ornament, and Men were counted Great, as they arriv'd to high Degrees of Piety; and the more Religious any Man was, the greater Majesty and Respect he was thought worthy of.

The Light they came attended withal fill'd the World, as the Sun doth the Universe, which comes forth from its Eastern Conclave, and presently diffuses, and spreads its Light over all the Surface of our Hemisphere.

sphere. So soon did the World feel the Influences, and Operations of these new Stars, and were forc'd to acknowledge their Divine Power and Virtue; for they press'd through the *Chaos* Mankind lay in, as Souls do pierce through Bodies, and the Life, Sense and Understanding they taught them, was wholly New, so different from what was in the World before, that Men gaz'd at the Spectacle, and lost themselves in the Admiration.

What Advantage the Soul can be suppos'd to give the Body, the same did the first Christians afford to the benighted World; and whatever inconveniencies the Body puts the Soul to, the same did the besotted World bring upon the first Christians; for as the Soul tenders the Body's welfare, so did they the World's; as the Soul directs the Body to do things Rational, so did they the World; as the Soul restrains the Body from doing mischief to itself, so did they the World; and as the Soul makes the Members of the Body Instruments of Righteousness, so did they attempt to reform the deluded World into Holiness: On the other side, as the Body afflicteth the Soul, so did the World persecute those first Christians; as the Body makes the Soul live uneasy, so did they incommode these excellent Men; as the Body puts ill Constructions on the Actions and Admonitions of the Soul, so the World did put the same on theirs; and as the Body seems to
long

long for nothing so much, as the ruin of the Soul; so the destruction of those Saints, was the great thing the World then did aim at.

Of such Persons was this Church made up who had not their original out of the Brain of *Jupiter*, as the Poets Fable of *Minerva*, but from the bloody and wounded Side of the Crucify'd *JESUS*. The Water and Blood which Flow'd from those Wounds, was that which gave them Being; and though their Principle was Water, yet it had this Virtue, that it made them all fiery, and fill'd them with Zeal and holy Flames; and as in the beginning of the Gospel, their Lord and Master was born of a Woman without a Man, so came they from a Man without a Woman, and the Miracle of their Birth was in a manner as great, as their Master's; for the Holy Ghost that impregnated the Blessed Virgin, baptiz'd them too; and the same Spirit, that rais'd the Mighty *JESUS* from his Grave, quickned their Mortal Bodies, and transform'd them into New Creatures.

They were a Commonwealth made up of Great and Low, of Rulers and Underlins, of Governors and Subjects; and yet nothing was more hard, than to distinguish one from the other; for whatever the difference might be, they esteem'd one another equal, and by their Carriage one would have concluded that they had been all of the same Degree

and Condition. Their *Pastors* and Chief Men were more known by their Munificence and Good-deeds, than by their Coats of Arms, or Splendor of their Offices.

They seem'd to be all of the same Kindred; for the Aged they honour'd as Fathers, and the Youths they tender'd as their Children. Those of the same Age call'd one another Brethren, and these were the Names they gave one another; and in these Titles they gloried more, than Men now-a-days do in the lofty Epithets of *Duke, Earl, Baron, Knight, or Gentleman*.

You might see amongst them abundance of Mothers that never had any Children, and Virgins took care of innocent Babes, as if they had been Mothers. No Family complain'd of Barrenness or Unfruitfulness, for they never wanted Children to provide for; and those that had none of their own, would be sure to find some to take care of. None wanted paternal Care, while so many Fathers study'd to do good, and Men were readier to Give, than others were to Ask, and seem'd to be sorrowful if they had not Objects, upon which they might exercise a paternal Charity.

There was hardly a Widow among them that complain'd of Solitariness, or sought Comfort in a second Husband, and second Marriage was counted little better than Adultery. Their Widows was the same, that they were whilst

whilst their Husbands liv'd; and finding that upon their Husbands Death, they were become Sisters of many Brethren, they aim'd at no other Contract, but that with Christ, who, if they were found worthy, would, as they thought, marry them at last to the Service of the Church, where they might exercise that Maternal Care to the Poor and Needy, which formerly they used to express to their own Children. Here you should see none Rejoycing that he had any thing of his own; for whatever he had, he look'd upon his Fellow-Christians as Co-heirs; and was so well contented, that they should inherit with him, that he thought, that which he had a Burthen, if his Neighbours were not to share in his Possessions. This present Life was the least thing they minded, while that to come, engross'd their Thoughts and Considerations. They were so entirely Christians, that in a manner they were nothing else, and cared not for being any thing else, lest if they should be something else, they should be suspected of deviating from their Master's Foot-steps.

Hence it was, that the *Pagans* accus'd them of Unrighteousness, and Unprofitableness, as if they were dead Weights in the World, contributing nothing to the Welfare and Prosperity of Mankind, and as if they stood for Cyphers in Human Societies, tho' none were more ready to communicate of

the Profit of their Labours to others than they, and did therefore on purpose keep close to their Calling and Profession, that they might be able to relieve the Needy. And though they were loath to take upon them the Employments of Magistrates and Governors, lest the Emperor's and God's Commands should clash, and they lie under a Temptation of obeying Man more than God; yet whenever they were thought worthy to bear Office in the Church, they readily embraced the Charge, that they might be in a greater Capacity to improve the Talents God had given them, to his Glory, and his People's good, and were pleased with the Trouble of the Office, that the World might see they had no design of Gain, or worldly Interest in the Administration.

They spake little, but their Thoughts were always Great and Heavenly; and as they look'd upon sublunary Objects, as too mean for their lofty Minds to rest on, so their Care was to keep the Eye of their Understandings fix'd on that World, which fades not away.

In the Eye of the World, they were *Pythagoreans*, and a kind of Dumb-Men; but when they met one with the other, and *CHRIST* was named, perfect *Peripateticks*, and no *Philosophers* would be freer in their Discourses than they. Their Business was to Live, not to talk great Matters; and the

the Name *Christian* did so charm them, that though there were various degrees of Men among them, Ecclesiasticks, Lay-men, Virgins, Widows, marry'd Persons, Confessors, Martyrs and Friends; yet the Name *Christian* swallow'd up all, and in this they triumph'd beyond all other Titles in the World; which made *Attalus* in *Eusebius*, when the Governor ask'd him, What Countryman he was? Who his Father and Mother were? What Trade, Profession and Employment he was of? Whether he was Rich or Poor? gave no other Answer, but this, That he was a Christian. And the same did the excellent *Blandina*. And by this Answer they gave the World to understand, that their Kindred, Pedigree, Nobility, Trade, Profession, Blood, &c. did all consist in this one Thing, and that beyond this, there could be no greater Honour and Dignity.

Their Communications or Answers in common Discourse were Yea, yea, and Nay, nay. An Oath they shunn'd as much as Perjury, and a Lye among them was more rare, than a Sea-Monster was to the Inhabitants of a Continent; for they said, That in their Baptism they were sign'd with the Mark of Truth, and that they could not be Servants of the God of Truth, if they should yield but to the least appearance of Falshood.

CHRIST, was the charming Word among them, and they heard nothing with greater joy, than that glorious Name. His Death and Sufferings rais'd their Souls, and his Cross was more precious to them, than Rubies. Hereby they learn'd to despise the World, and the Marrow, Virtue, and Efficacy of their Religion, was the Death of *JESUS*.

This Death they remember'd, not only in the Sacrament, but at their common Meals; and when they refresh'd their Bodies with Meat and Drink, they talk'd of that Meat which would feed them to Everlasting Life; and herein they walked contrary to the Custom of the Drunkards of old, who us'd to carry a Death's Head with them to their Drunken Meetings, and set it upon the Table, and with the sight of that, and remembrance of what they must shortly come to, encourag'd themselves in Drunkenness. The first Christians remember'd indeed the Death of *CHRIST* at their ordinary Tables, but it was, to make Pain, and Torment, and Death, and the Cross familiar to them; for the Afflictions of this Life they look'd upon, as the Midwives, that promoted their new Birth, and the best Companions of their Faith, and the faith-fullest Nurses of their Hopes.

In the Cities and Towns where they liv'd, none was unknown to the other; for they
Pray'd

Pray'd together, heard the Word together, met frequently at Meals together, and were continually helpful one to the other; inso-much, that wherever they met, they knew one another; and when they durst not with their Lips, yet with their Eyes and Gestures, they would salute one another, send Kisses of Peace one to another, rejoyce in the common Hope, and if permitted, assist one another in Adversities. This is one of us, saith such a Saint, for we have seen him in our Oratories, we have pray'd with him, we have been at the Lord's Table together, we have heard the Scriptures read together, we have kneel'd together, we have been instructed together. O happy Kindred! which comes by Prayer, and Communion of the Body and Blood of *JESUS*; O Blessed Relations! where Men are not call'd Brothers of the Sun or of the Stars, as the Ancient Tyrants styl'd themselves, but Brethren of *CHRIST*, Children of *GOD*, and Citizens of Heaven!

When a Christian, who was a Stranger, came to them, before ever he shew'd his Testimonials, they knew him by his lean Visage, and meager Face, which his frequent Fasting had brought him to, by the Modesty of his Eyes, by the Gravity of his Speech, by his Gate and Habit, and mortify'd Behaviour, for something Divine did shine through their Looks, and One might read the Characters of the Spirit in their Coun-

Countenance. Nor is it very strange, that a good Man should be known by his Carriage; for to this Day, a serious Person, though he says nothing, something in his Lineaments, and Features, and Postures, will betray the inward Zeal and Sincerity of his Soul; and his Deportment will discover, there is something more than ordinary in him, as much as the *Roman Senator* was betray'd by the Perfumes about him.

Whenever they were thrust into the Crowd of Malefactors, their Fellow Christians soon guess'd who they were; for they hastned with Meekness to their Martyrdom, without expressing any Impatience, or Indignation, submitted their Necks to the stroke of the Axe prepar'd for them. They us'd to look frequently up to Heaven, and One might by their Smiles see, that betwixt GOD and them, there was a more than ordinary Correspondence. Sometimes they would provoke the Executioners to begin their Torments, and be earnest with the Hangman not to delay their Agonies. Sometimes they would laugh at the Pain they suffer'd, and in the very Jaws of Death betray a taste of Immortality. They look'd upon Christianity, as a Religion, that taught them to suffer valiantly; and to them it was no other but a Science, to instruct Men to despise Riches, Honours, and Torments too, in order to Everlasting Glory.

Their

Their Presidents and Pastors were known by no other Character but that of Officioufness and Charity, nor had their Shepherds any other Mark to be distinguish'd by, but their willingness to advance the good of the Sheep, and their readines to every good Word and Work. And indeed so were the Christians in general known by their mutual Love, and kind Offices.

If any fell sick, the rest did chearfully run to comfort him ; and this Employment their Women were chiefly ambitious of, who seldom stirr'd out of their own Houses, but upon such Occasions, and when they resorted to their Oratories. They were seen but rarely in the Streets, except such charitable Employments call'd them forth ; for none deny'd her Neighbour her Care, nor could any worldly Respects discourage them from that Officioufness.

If any were Rich, or Noble, they were the readier to express their Compassion, and Women of the highest Descent were the forwardest to assist the Calamitous in their Need ; for Religion had mortify'd in them all Punctillos of Honour and State, and made them remember, that in CHRIST they were all equal. She in whose Veins the noblest Blood did run, would say of her poor distressed Neighbour, she is my Sister, my Fellow-member, one that hath part with me in my Dear Redeemer. If she be
ancient

ancient, she is my Mother, said she, if she is younger, she is my Daughter; nor were these Expressions of course only, but they were written in their Hearts, and their Lips spoke what their Minds believ'd, and these Words were at once pronounc'd, and thought. Hence it was, that the greatest Ladies touch'd their poorest Neighbour's Sores, bound up their Wounds, apply'd Plaisters to them, made their Beds and tended them, as the meanest Servants. Here you might see the Industry of the one, there the Sweetness and Patience of another; one would turn the sick Sister, the other help her up, the third dress her, the fourth feed her, and in all this the sick Creature saw as it were the Face of the Lord *JESUS*. She that tended the sick, look'd upon CHRIST in her that was sick, and she that was sick, thought she saw CHRIST in the Person that tended her. So Divine, so Heavenly were their Works of Mercy, that one was to the other in God's stead, and that Saying of CHRIST, *What you have done unto the least of these my Brethren, you have done it unto me*, did not depart from their Memories. Thus stood the Case with the Holy Women then, and this Advantage they reaped by their charitable Care, that when their Husbands dy'd, they were taken as Deaconesses into the Church, and thus they

they prepar'd themselves for CHRIST, and the Church's Service.

If any were Imprison'd upon Account of Religion, all that knew them would fly to them. No Keeper so hard-hearted, but they would find out a way to smooth him ; no Lock, no Bar so strong, but they would make a shift to break it, either by their Gift, or their soft Answers, not to make the Jailors false to their Trusts, but to get an Opportunity of seeing their Suffering Friends ; and when they saw them, one would kiss their Chains and Fetters, another lay his Lips to their Wounds, a third give their bruised Members and tired Bodies such Refreshment as was needful ; and as dismal as the Dungeon was, here they would Discourse of CHRIST, sing Psalms, pray together, and their Pastors would come and Administer the Lord's Supper to them, requiring no other Temple than that of a Devout Heart, not standing upon the Ceremony of an Altar, but that of a wounded Spirit.

If any of them were driven into Exile, in every place they met with Brethren, and Fellow-Christians, and these would run to them, comfort them, lead them into their Houses, and treat them as Members of their own Family, especially, when by Letters from their Brethren, they understood, that for CHRIST's sake they were driven from their Native Home.

Were

Were any condemn'd to Work in Mines or Quarries, the Neighbouring Christians that heard of it, would presently come together, help the innocent Man, endeavour to make his burden light, feed him with Victuals, and assist him in the performing of his Task.

Were any of them sent, through the Malice of the Heathen Governor to the Correction-house, or forc'd to labour hard in Caves and Dens, or lamentably scourg'd, beaten, and abus'd for the Name of the Lord *JESUS*. The rest that heard of it, would not complain, nor think their Brethren unhappy, but rather count themselves so, because they were not counted worthy to suffer for the Name of *JESUS*, and therefore would wish that this might be their Lot and Portion too.

If the Fury of Tyrants abated, or remitted at any time, and the imprison'd and afflicted Believers got leave to return home again, some wounded, some bruis'd, some with disjoynted Bones, some half Burnt, some Maim'd, some with one Arm, some with one Eye, some with one Leg only; their Friends would run out to them, and strive who should first receive them into their Houses. Happy the Man that could kiss their Wounds, and refresh them with Necessaries and Conveniencies; and the longer

longer any Man could harbour such a Christian at his House, the happier he thought himself to be. And such Men as had thus suffer'd for CHRIST they honour'd for the future, and esteem'd them equal with their Pastors and Presidents. Indeed, out of these they chose their Bishops, thinking those fittest to serve CHRIST'S Altar, who had already made themselves a Sacrifice for him. Thus Men purchas'd the Degree of Pastors by their Holiness, and their eminent Sanctity, which press'd through Wounds and Tortures for the Name of CHRIST, prepar'd them for that Function. Men that were strong to suffer, they justly thought might be fittest to labour in GOD'S Church, and they that had been such Champions for the Truth, they look'd upon as the properest Instruments to Defend it to their Death.

Nor did their Kindness extend only to their Friends, but reach'd even to their greatest Enemies ; and they that just before were persecuted by them, if their Persecutors fell sick, or were afflicted, or the Plague of GOD came upon them, these injur'd Christians would offer their Services, support them, comfort them, admonish them, attend at their Bed-side, and lend a helping-hand, cherish them, supple their Sores, relieve them, and with a Pity great and magnanimous, weep over their calamitous Estate
to

to the Amazement of the Pagan World, who were now ready to look upon them as Angels, when just before they thought them as bad as Devils.

Poverty was the least thing that troubled them; nor did Want sit so heavy on their Souls, as it doth on ours; for they had learned to undervalue Riches; and that which made them slight it, were these two Impressions the Apostle's Doctrine had made on their Souls.

1. That sunk deep into their Hearts, That here we have no continuing City, but we seek one to come. That all we see here, is but shadow and imagery, but the Substance is not yet visible; that the Fashion of this World will pass away, and the Gaudes and Glories below the Moon afford no real Satisfaction. This made it ridiculous in their Eyes, to snatch at a Butterfly or a flying Feather; and they rationally believ'd that whatever is subject to time and change, will certainly make itself Wings, and flee away, and leave the Soul as empty as it found it, and that therefore their Thoughts must be turn'd another way, even there where constant Satisfaction, lasting Content, permanent Happiness, perfect Beauty, and uninterrupted Joys are to be found; and indeed, this duly weigh'd will breed a mighty Contempt of temporal Things, and a certain Expectation of future Bliss.

2. Another

2. Another thing that did no less contribute towards it, was, their Belief, that the End of the World was at hand, and the Day of Judgment approaching. The time is short, cry'd their Pastors, the LORD is coming, He will be upon you before you are aware; to what purpose will ye treasure up Riches, Lands, Goods, Houses, which the Fire will shortly consume, and carry away? Hence it was, that they liv'd every Moment in expectation of the Last Day, and troubled not their Heads with thinking how they should fill their Barns, and their Coffers; for they knew not how long they should enjoy them; and no marvel, if under these Thoughts and Circumstances, they freely parted with their worldly Goods, sold their Lands and Houses, and bought no more, and brought what they had, and laid it down at the Apostle's Feet, that they might follow a Naked Saviour naked.

Nor did the Care of their Children fill their Hearts with anxious Thoughts; for they were sensible, that whenever the Church had notice of their Want, they would certainly be reliev'd, and look'd after; for as many Fathers and Mothers left their Estates, and what they had to the Church, so the Church imploy'd those Legacies, or Gifts, to support all those that should be necessitous. Besides this, their Pastors both by their Doctrine and Exam-

ple, admonish'd them to be diligent in working with their own Hands, that they might get something not only to be beneficial to themselves, but to others too, and indeed, they thought they did little or nothing, if of what they got, they did not communicate to those, who were not able to help themselves.

They had nothing that was superfluous; and hence it was, that there was but little striving about what they left. To lay up much Goods for many Years, they thought was fitter for Heathens than for Christians; and having seen no such thing in their Master, they could not tell how it could be proper in his Servants.

They believ'd, that it was their Pastor's Office to take Care of all, to maintain the Poor, and to distribute to all according to their several Necessities; for since God took that Care upon him to Feed the World, they thought, it would not be unbecoming his Ministers to do so too. This made them entrust at first the Apostles, and afterwards their Spiritual Pastors, with what they could spare, to receive of them again, when they should stand in need. And now their Teachers did truly become their Fathers, and they acknowledg'd themselves to be their Children; and owning them for their Fathers, they gave them a Right to Admonish them, to Correct, to Reprove them,

to Direct them, and to Lead them to Perfection, and own'd a strong Obligation at the same time to Love, Honour, Reverence, and Obey them.

And though the Number of Christians was already prodigiously increas'd, yet were not their Numbers troublesome to their Pastors, who lov'd to do Good, and to spend themselves, and to be spent in that Service; Men who had no Design, but to lay themselves out for G O D, and his Church, and with *Moses*, were contented to be surrounded with People all Day long, to discharge that Paternal Care of their Souls and Bodies, which they had undertaken. Nor were their Pastors therefore the Richer, because their Disciples brought what they had to them, for they that were to receive from them, were more, than those who gave; and they took it in, only with a Design to disperse it again among the Needy. Love of Money, and admiration of Riches, and anxious worldly Cares and Desires of Hoarding, were things they had an Antipathy against; and though out of that Stock they provided themselves with Necessaries, yet for Ingrossing any thing to themselves besides, was a Thought as far from their Minds, as the Heaven they long'd for was from that Earth on which they trampled, and look'd upon with pity and scorn; for, alas! what Greediness could there be in them

after Temporal Means, who were already greater than the World could make them, and took delight in nothing, but surveying that Glory, which e'er long they should rejoyce, and triumph in?

So that they took the People's Money without any danger of Covetousness. They were Men that had fought for CHRIST, and left all to follow him; their Thoughts were big with the Promises of the Gospel, and consequently with Hopes of Everlasting Joys; they had already tasted of the Powers of the World to come, and mock'd at worldly-mindedness: They remember'd that they were but Stewards for the Poor, and Nursing-Fathers to Persons in distress, and Presidents of the Hospitals. Nor did their High Places make them uneasy in their Poverty, for they lov'd it, and made choice of it as a Companion, and a Friend. This made the People love them exceedingly, not because they took delight to see their Pastors Poor, but because they saw, that they who had so much Money at their disposal, would make no use of it for their own Interest, but were contentedly Poor in that Plenty, and would want themselves rather than see others faint.

If any were so Malicious as to traduce their Teachers, and brand them with the Guilt of Covetousness, or Slander them, their Pastors us'd no other Weapon to put
by

by the Sting, but Meekness to the Back-biter, and their own Innocence by degrees dash'd, and wip'd away all Aspersions. Hence the Christians gave them their own freely, for they believ'd they could lose nothing by it, and long Experience had confirm'd that Belief, that Envy it self could make no Impressions upon them to the contrary; when it was in their Hands they thought it safer than in their own; and being hereby freed from abundance of Cares and Incumbrances, they press'd more chearfully on to the promis'd Mark.

If any Christian kept any Land in his Hands, his Care was so to use his Income, as to give God the First-fruits of it, to bring his Gifts to the Church, to lay by somewhat for Alms, to help and assist the Sick, to relieve the Prisoners and Captives, not only such as were within the Verge of the Town he liv'd in, but others also. Thus did those Men live under Riches, as under Thorns, and were sensible of nothing so much as this, that great Wealth, is but a great Temptation to be Vain and Sensual, which made them use this Self-denial in their Incomes.

He that for a Kindness he did to his Neighbour, expected a Recompence, was look'd upon as a Person greedy of filthy Lucre; and he that could do nothing for his Friend without a Reward, or prospect of

some Profit to himself, was censur'd as a Person ignorant of the Fundamental Law of their Religion. Usury, Interest, and such Names were scarce heard of among them; and Oppression was a thing, which they thought none that nam'd the Name of CHRIST, could be guilty of. In a Word, they desir'd nothing so much in this World, as to be quickly gone from it; and they thought it the joyfullest News imaginable to understand that they were to be dissolv'd, and to go to CHRIST.

This was the Temper, Nature, and Constitution of that Commonwealth. The Members of it look'd mean and contemptible. Nothing about them was pompous, either in Cloaths, or Diet, or Habitation, or Householdstuff. Such among them, as were Noble or Learned, or of a genteel Extract, laid aside their Pride, and all their swelling Titles, forgot that they were better Born, or Educated, than others, and became like their Brethren. Plaiting and Curling the Hair, was a thing that both their Men and Women prescrib'd from their Care, and they thought that Labour lost, which was employ'd on such Superfluities. They were jealous of their serious frame of Spirit, and therefore all such Dresses, as might serve to infuse Vanity into their Minds, or damp their Zeal to Religion, they shunn'd, as they did Houses infected with the Plague.

They

They minded no such new things as Modes and Fashions, nor did any new Habit, or Ornament that came up, entice them to imitation. Decency was their Rule, and Modesty the Standard of their Habit and Conversation. They wore nothing about them that was either costly or curious, and their greatest Study and Contrivance was, how to advance their Souls, and make them fit for the Wedding of the Lamb; Laying on either White or Red upon the Face, or disfiguring it with something Black, and of kin to Hell, they knew not what it meant. Their Garments were either Linnen or Woollen, or Furr, or Sheep's-skin, and their Furniture Mean and Homely.

Without GOD, they attempted nothing; and whatever Enterprize it was they betook themselves to, they sanctify'd it by Prayer, and Supplication. If they went out either to Sow, or to Plough, or to Reap, or to Build, GOD's Blessing was first sought, and begg'd, and they never put on their Cloaths, but entertain'd themselves all the while with some holy Reflections. Theaters and seeing of Plays they hated, as a thing contrary to their Profession; and though the Heathen despis'd them for it, look'd upon them as Unsociable, Men of pitiful Spirits, Strangers to the Art of Conversation, Melancholly Wretches, Brethren of Worms, and no better than the Vermine

of the Earth; yet they matter'd not their Censures, and triumph'd more in a good Conscience, than the other could do in all the Vanities and Glories of this present World. The World's Contempt was their Glory, and they were proud of being Scorn'd and Undervalu'd by the Vulgar Crowd, that they might with greater Earnestness long after a better Inheritance. If any wanted Business, he would find some; and they that had no need to Work for their Living, Work'd for the Poor. Idleness they had an Aversion from, as from the Root of Evil, and great Men and Women would do something, which the Needy might be the better for. The greatest Lady would not disdain to Spin, or Sow, or Knit, for her distressed Neighbour, and like Bees, they were ever busy, and employ'd for the common Good.

Love of the World was Death to them; and they thought it a certain sign, that they had no Portion in CHRIST, if they did serve both GOD and Mammon. To be in the World, and not of the World, was their *Motto*; and to be other Men than they seem'd to be, was the thing they chiefly aim'd at. They seem'd to profane, because they would worship no Heathen Gods, but were the devoutest Persons in the World to the True GOD; and they forgot to be Men, that they might be the better Christians. Not a few left their high Places, and great Dignities to become Christians,

Christians, and chose to be low and contemptible in the World, that they might have no Impediments in their way to Heaven.

Servants never concern'd themselves to get their Freedom, for their Masters were Christians, and themselves were so; both cheerfully discharg'd their Duties one to another, and consequently liv'd in perfect Peace and Unity. Many Servants that might have had their Freedom would not, because they liv'd sufficiently happy under their Believing Masters; and while they saw nothing but Love in their Masters, their very Bondage was perfect Freedom.

Where a whole Family was Christian, they all did rise together, and at one and the same time, Pray'd and Read, and Sung Psalms, and observ'd one Way and Custom in their Devotions. If one Family had any thing to do more than ordinary, the Neighbouring Family would help them. If one was to Fast, his Neighbour Fasted with him; If one was to Pray for some signal Blessing, his Neighbour did Pray with him; If one Wept, his Neighbour did Weep with him; If one Mourned, his Neighbour Mourned with him, as if both had committed the same Sin; In a Word, they had their Joys and Sorrows common, and they might be said to be all in one, and one in all.

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In their Meals they were temperate, so Abſtinent, that our Faſts were but their ordinary way of Living; and indeed one Reaſon why they were ſo holy at their Tables was, becauſe for a long time either before or after Meals, they conſtantly receiv'd the *Eucharift*. And in ſuch Meetings they expreſs'd huge Love one to another, and made their Friendſhip inviolable, for they Seal'd it with the Blood of *JESUS*. Theſe were true Love-Feaſts, and they were manag'd with that Gravity, Chaſtity, and Modeſty, and Singing of Pſalms, that the World might ſee, it was a Preparation for a greater Supper.

Their Houſes were open to Strangers, as well as to their Friends and Neighbours; and where the Traveller could produce a Certificate, that he was a practical Chriſtian, he could not fail of a moſt hearty Welcome. Hoſpitality was their Badge, and he that would not receive a Brother into his Houſe, becauſe Poor and Ragged, was either forbid the Church, or not ſuffer'd to come into it.

Their Paſtors and Rulers oblig'd them to certain Faſts, but beſides thoſe of their own accord, they chaſten'd themſelves by frequent Abſtinence. In their Faſts they were exceeding ſtrict; and they ſo emaciated their

their Bodies by these Rigors, that their Faintness, Weariness, and Sackcloth and Ashes, seem'd to force Heaven to Pity and Compassion. In short, whatever was Voluptuous they hated, and look'd upon as unsuitable to the Crucify'd *JESUS*; and so improper for that perfect Wisdom they aim'd at, that they prescribed it as an Enemy, and shunn'd it like the rankest Poyson, and admitted no more of it but what was just necessary for the support of that Life, the Great Creator had given them to spend to his Glory.

And though they never had study'd *Pythagoras*, yet both their Faith and Reason told them, that as the Body waxes stronger by the death of the Soul, so the Soul becomes more valiant and lively by the death of the Body. This made them Conquerors of those Pleasures of the Flesh, which in all Ages have weaken'd the bravest Men into Women, melted Hearts of Iron, and conquer'd the greatest Conquerors of the World.

To suppress such Satisfactions of the Flesh they were so watchful, so courageous, so magnanimous, that they seem'd Angels more than Men, and were actually nearer to *God*, to whom they liv'd, than to the World in which they liv'd. In their Lives, chaste and modest; in their Married Estate,
Moderate

Moderate and Holy ; and not a Man came near his Wife, after he perceiv'd or had notice that she was with Child, till she was deliver'd ; and even then when they came together, their Thoughts were so innocent that they propos'd no other end but the Procreation of Children to be brought up in the Fear and Nurture of the LORD. In the very Works of their Calling, they would sing of CHRIST, and make Spiritual Objects so familiar to them, that in their very Sleep and Dreams, they rolled in their Imagination ; They were always ready for Prayer, and holy Ejaculations ; and so addicted to the love of Goodness, that they could not endure a vicious Person ; and if they met with any such in their Assemblies, did thrust him out from their Communion, and made it Criminal for any Christian either to Eat, Drink, or Converse, or Talk, or keep Company with him.

They took particular notice of him, who taught any thing contrary to the Doctrine of their Pastors, and no Plague-fore was shunn'd more than a new up-start Principle. If they heard any thing contrary to the Faith deliver'd to the Saints, they either stopp'd their Ears, or made haste to be gone from the Place the dangerous Tenet was publish'd in. New Fangles were that which their Teachers seriously warn'd them against ;

against; and the great character of Heresy was, that the Doctrine was New, and unknown to the Apostles. To continue this Purity of Doctrine in their Church, their custom was, to read the Scripture, and hear it explain'd by their Pastors in publick Congregations; and though they read it at home, they were fearful to explain any thing, but what they had heard their Pastors explain in publick before, and according to their Expositions they understood these Oracles.

It was a very common thing in those Days both for Laymen and Clergymen to learn the Bible without Book; and many of them had the Word so ready, that nothing could befall them, but they had a Plaister or Medicine ready from that inexhaustible Treasury. From hence their Souls got more than ordinary Strength and Nourishment, and their Minds receiv'd that vivacity and quickness, that it gave Life even to their Bodies starv'd almost through Watching, Fasting, and other voluntary Penalties.

Of their Teachers they were so observant, that without them they would begin nothing, and go no where without their Letters of Recommendation. Without their Advice, they would not Marry, nor do any thing considerable in their civil Affairs without

out asking their Counsel and Approbation, for they look'd upon them as their Fathers, and as Religion had made them so, so they thought the Obligation to consult them upon all Occasions was the stronger. These they receiv'd into their Houses as the Saints of old did Angels with joy and trembling; and whenever they met them, though upon the Road, or in the Streets, they would fall down and kiss their Feet, and refuse to rise, till they had given them their Blessing and Benediction; to which Blessing they said *Amen*, rose again, and so parted with a kiss.

They thought it no small Happiness to lodge their Pastors at their Houses; for when they had them, they believ'd they had got some good Spirit in their Houses, and with them they pray'd, and hop'd, that now their Prayers could not miscarry, when joyn'd with the Incense of those, who had so often mov'd God to be merciful to a whole Congregation. For this reason, they were desirous to entertain Pious Men in general, to do them good, and to relieve them, as they did their Domesticks, for they thought the Presence of such Men a Blessing to their Families, and a Protection from innumerable Evils, that might otherwise befall them.

From the Unity and Peaceableness of their Teachers it was, that the Christians then, though

though very numerous, continu'd unanimous in the Primitive Doctrine and Discipline ; and though the several Assemblies might differ in Rites and Ceremonies, yet the mighty Love they bore one to another, constrain'd them to over-look those Differences ; and though they vary'd in some outward Acts of Worship, yet their Affections were so strongly glew'd together, that nothing but Death could break the League or Amity.

If one Neighbour chanc'd to quarrel with another, and they broke forth into Contention and Enmity, they were so long excluded from the Prayers of the Assembly, till they had cordially reconcil'd themselves one to the other. This Punishment was then thought great and grievous, and Men were so uneasy under these Excommunications, that the fear of them kept them from Animosities ; and rather than undergo such Censures, would suffer themselves to be defrauded ; and when they were beaten, would not beat again ; when revil'd, would not revile again ; and when abused, would not abuse again ; nay, look'd upon an unjust Calumny as a piece of Martyrdom, and therefore did bear it patiently. Those that knew themselves guilty of a great Sin were afraid to appear in the Publick ; and they that were fallen into any notorious Errors, durst not so much profane

profane the Prayers of the Church, as to present themselves there with the rest of the Assembly. So great was the Dread of God's Majesty in those Days, that even a desperate Offender was afraid to take God's Covenant in his Mouth, while he hated to be reform'd.

Their meeting or coming together to Pray, they esteem'd a thing so Sacred, that no Frowns, no Thunders, no Threatnings of Tyrants could make them forbear it; and being conscious of their Innocence, they justly thought, their Enemies might by their Authority forbid, but could not with any colour of Reason prohibit their Assemblies. This made them flock to their Oratories, though it was Death to go; and Parents with their Children would run, though the next news they were like to hear, was, *Christianos ad Leones, Throw those Dogs to the Lions.* Though they were thrust into Mines and Prisons, yet they would find opportunities to Pray, and Celebrate the Communion together; for some of their Brethren that knew of their Distress, flock'd to them; and the first thing they did together, was laying force on Heaven with their Tears and Prayers; for indeed, it was Death to them not to joyn with their Fellow-Christians in Supplications and strong Cries; for though they were very diligent in this Duty in their private Houses,

Houses, yet they took no Prayers to be so weighty or prevalent, as those that were offer'd up in company.

The Days they appointed for publick Prayer, were the Lord's Day, the Anniversaries of their Martyrs, and *Wednesday* and *Friday* of every Week, on which two Days they had their Stations, and fasted, and humbled themselves before Almighty God; besides their *Vigils* at Night, which they thought sinful to spend without Prayer, and Celebrations of God's Goodness and Holiness. Strange was their longing for the House of God, and the thirsty Earth cannot gape for Rain and Water more, than they panted after their going with the Pious Multitude to their Oratories; which made *Dionysius Alexandrinus*, when driven into Exile, and us'd very coarsely by the Soldiers that had the charge of him, complain in a Letter to his Friend, how near it went to him to be depriv'd of those opportunities of meeting his Brethren on the usual Festivals; and this he professes was infinitely more troublesome to him, than to be chas'd from his Native home, or to live upon Bread and Water, or to lie on the cold Ground, or to endure other inconveniencies.

In their publick Assemblies, even little Children that had been Baptiz'd, would come and appear among the graver sort, and

beg of their Pastors to offer up their Prayers for their advancement in the ways of Holiness, and give themselves up to their Direction and Government. So fervent were all sorts of People among them, and they seem'd ambitious of nothing so much, as of exceeding one another in frigance and watchfulness.

That they us'd the Sign of the Cross much, cannot be deny'd. Indeed they made no Crosses of Gold, or Silver, but would cross their Breasts, and Foreheads, as a Badge of their Profession; and whether they were going or standing, or when they met one another, or were to sit down at Table, or to take their rest, even in the Streets, and Market-places, they would sign themselves with this Sign, and without this, they scarce undertook any thing, the rather, because it distinguish'd them from the Heathens, and was a Testimony of their Joy, that they were counted worthy to suffer Reproach for the Name of their Crucify'd Redeemer.

It is almost incredible what Cost they bestow'd upon the Burials of their deceas'd Friends; and they were so resolute in it, that though their Enemies both envy'd, and revild, and sometimes punish'd them for it, yet they went on, and look'd upon't as sinful to neglect those Bodies, when dead, which

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in their Lifetime had been Temples of the Holy Ghost. The care they took to embalm them was such, that the *Arabs* profess'd they got more Money for their Perfumes of the poor *Christians*, than of the richer *Pagans*, who yet were never without Incense in their Idol Temples. Such Pains and Cost did they bestow in performing the Exequies of God's Servants; and though they had little in the World, yet what they had they were very free of, on such occasions; for they look'd on such Men's Funerals as Prologues to their Eternal Rest, and this Cost was an Emblem, how much G O D valu'd those Saints that dyed in the L O R D, and how richly he would crown them, having run their Race with Patience.

To their Princes and Magistrates they were ever very submissive, and in all lawful things obedient to a tittle. In their Prayers they always remember'd them, and though they persecuted and afflicted them, yet that did not abate their Zeal, and Vows for their Welfare and Prosperity. Rebellion against their Governors they hated as Witchcraft, and ever thought it safer to suffer than to resist. Hence they paid Tribute without murmuring; for their Opinion was, that no Man could have that Power, except it were given him from Above. His Tyranny could not make them neglect their Duty, nor his ill Government tempt them to forget their

Allegiance; where the Man was rough and hard-hearted that was over them, they look'd upon the Providence as a Means to try their Faith, and even then, when they might have resisted and conquer'd, they would not, because they thought it was unsuitable to their Religion.

This was to be a Christian; a Creature outwardly corruptible, yet at the same time, with the Hand of Faith grasping Heaven, and the immense Glory of Paradise, and labouring Day and Night, that he might have something to give to God's Ministers, to the Poor, and to his own Family.

Not a few of them renounc'd the Satisfaction of Matrimony, liv'd single, forsook all, retir'd into Deserts, bury'd themselves in poor Cottages, study'd the Scriptures, contemplated Heaven, and liv'd to G O D.

Some Travelled into far Countries, Preach'd the Gospel, and when they had laid a good Foundation there, went farther, and spent their Lives in Pains and Labours, and doing Good.

Thousands of their Virgins freely and voluntarily dedicated themselves to G O D, and would be marry'd to none but him; and tho' many times they were tempted by rich Fortunes,

Fortunes, and Offers of great Consequence, yet nothing could alter their Resolutions of continuing Virgins, and so they liv'd, and so they dyed; as they liv'd to *Christ*, so they dyed in him; their Zeal was great, and even then, when Christianity began to decay, their Lights did so shine and burn, that they were enough to have reviv'd it again into its former Glory, if Men would but have set their Examples before them, and afforded them any serious Consideration.

It is true, even among these Christians in the purest Ages, there were divers, that by their Lives disgrac'd that noble Religion. But these were chastis'd with very severe Discipline, and as long as they were in a state of Sin, were not look'd upon as Christians; nor did any Christian converse with them. If they repented, they were forc'd to make their Repentance publick, and for some Years together, to give such Demonstration of it, that the Devil himself could not but acknowledge the sincerity of it. By Weeping and Prostrating themselves before God's People, and imploring the assistance of Believers, and a hundred such Austerities, they sought to be reconcil'd to God, and to his Church, which made the Fathers say, That the Penitent were no Scandals, but an Ornament of the Church: They were in a manner a distinct Church, and the way to be united to the
more

more sincere Believers, was now harder than at their first embracing of Christianity; yet these Penitents might truly say of themselves as the Spouse in the *Canticles*, *I am black, but comely, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem.*

With this kind of Life, the first Christians amaz'd the unbelieving World, and their Power and Number quickly grew so formidable, that the Emperors themselves began to be startled at their progress, and therefore employ'd their Might and Greatness to oppose it. To crush their towering Piety, the Heathens shew'd them Racks, Flames, Gibbets, Grid-irons, Cauldrons, boiling Oyl, Lyons, Bears, wild Bulls, and set before them the worldly Prudence of Philosophers, but by the Grace and Assistance of that *JESUS*, who strengthen'd them, they were more undaunted at their Torments than their Hangmen, did fight with Lyons, and smile, and were more daring than the Flames they suffer'd in, firmer than the Racks that broke their Bones, and by their Practices surmounted all the great Acts that were ever done by Heroes, and the most famous Conquerors. They overcame Death by a desire of Death, and were more willing to dye than their Executioners to suffer them. Their Blood prov'd the Seed of the Church, and the more they Massacred, the more their Numbers grew, till at last the Emperors themselves

themselves became Christians, and were forced to yield to the Faith and Patience of *JESUS*, and the Christians at last gave Law to those, who at first did Stab and Murder them, and conquer'd them in the end, who in the beginning butcher'd them like Dogs, and such inconsiderable Animals.

And now, Sir, it is very likely that some, who may chance to read these Lines, will look upon the Account I have given you, as a Spiritual Romance, an Emblem rather of what Men might be, were they in a more perfect State, than of what they generally were.

But they that shall pass this Censure on the Premises, do but betray their Ignorance, and I can only send them to the Writers in those Age, when Christianity was deck'd and adorn'd with these Jewels, and quoted by my Authors, such as *Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Athenagoras, Minutius Felix, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Cyprian*, and others that succeeded them; and if People to favour their Lusts, will neither believe, nor take pains to search into the truth of Things, all that can be said is, that they are resolute in their Infidelity.

SIR, I am persuaded you have chosen the better part, and as I do not question your

your Belief of these Passages, so that the
Saints may be your Patterns, and their
Actions the great Rule of your Life, and
the Spirit of GOD your Guide in these
Ways of Holiness, is the hearty Wish and
Prayer of,

S I R,

*Your Affectionate Friend,**and Servant,*

ANTHONY HORNECKY

F I N I S.



your
the better part, and as I do not question
I am persuaded you have chosen